69 THE 116
SAINTS
GUIDE,
IN THREE
TREATISES;

I. *The Mirror of Mercie,* on Gen. 6. 13.

II. *The Carnall Mans Condition,* on Rom. 1. 18

III. *The Plantation of the Righteous,* on Psa. 1. 3

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MVSEVM
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NICVM

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THE

THE MERROR OF MERCY.

GEN. 6. 13.

And God ſaid my Spirit ſhall not ſtrive with Man, for that he alſo is fleſh, yet his dayes ſhall be an hundred and twentie yeares.

THe Scope of this Chapter, and the intendment of the Spirit of GOD therein, is mainely to diſco-

ver two things, *viz.* The different condition, or ſeverall ſorts of the people of the old world before the Flood, in the firſt part of the Chapter, and then the different diſpenſation of Gods providence towards them, anſwerable both to their perſons and ſinnes, in the ſecond part of the Chapter.

In the firſt, obſerve firſt, the carriage of the common route in ſeverall Expreſſions, from the fift, to the end of the ſeven verſe; and Secondly, the holy demeanour of bleſſed *Noah* in the eight and nine verſes, *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, Noah was a juſt man and perfect in his generation and walked with God.* *Noah* in that wicked time and place, and amongſt

a wicked people, was an *holy and righteous man*, ſaith the Text.

Touching the carriage and behaviour of wicked men, obſerve the hainouſneſſe of their ſinnes in thoſe unreaſonable and unlawfull luſts and abhominable actions againſt the light of Nature and the law of God; ſaith the text before, *the ſonnes of God ſaw the Daughters of men that they were faire, and they took them wives of all which they choſe.* As who ſhould ſay, they cared not whether they pleaſed God or not, they are reſolved to pleaſe themſelves, their owne filthy appetites and humours.

The ſons of God were the poſterity of *Seth* who had the ordinances and the worſhip of God in outward profeſſi-

on: And the daughters of men the daughters of *Cain*, they were of another brood, and theſe ſonnes againſt Reaſon, Religion, even all common ſence and honeſtie againſt the Lawes of God and the workes of their owne conſciences joyne with theſe daughters in marriage, and theſe mongrell kind of marriages produce Monſters, not onely for ſtate of body, but of monſtrous condition and manners, ſuch as were monſtrouſly proud, prophane and in all wickedneſſe abounding.

Secondly, touching Gods proceedings and carriage of himſelfe againſt the generation of theſe men. Obſerve it in the words of the Text, wherein the Lord ſets downe as it were a ſentance of doome againſt

againſt them, whence obſerve *that as ſoone as ſin is propounded God enters immediatly into a Counſell and determination againſt the Sinners.*

Expect when once baſe and ſinfull courſes are put in practiſe, Judgment comes and that ſuddenly. So from the ſins of theſe people obſerve *That marriages with a contrary Religion ever brings deſtruction.* Obſer. *Soloman* tooke ſtrange wives and therefore his Crowne was rent from him. They choſe new gods ſaith *Deborah* and there was warre in their gates. Here is no ſooner mention made of combining and mixing with contrary Religions, *Seth* and his poſterity, with *Cain* and his, but Judgment forthwith enſues and proceeds, *And God*

ſaid my ſpirit ſhall not ſtrive with man, for that he alſo is fleſh, yet his daies ſhall be an hundred and twenty yeares. In which words take notice, Firſt of Gods determination what he will doe; ſeeing they will have their owne waies and wills, he will not want of his will; he will proceede to Judgment, and if God determine a Judgment, who ſhall hinder it ?

2. Secondly, of the reaſon of Gods determination herein.

In the Determination conſider. Firſt, what is ſuppoſed and muſt neceſſarily be granted; *That God doth and will deſtroy Sinners.*

2. Secondly what is expreſt and ſet downe, and that generally and particularly.

Generally, *That God will ſtrive*

ſtrive with Sinners before he enters into Judgment. In the Text, *one hundred and twenty yeares*, a large time of Repentance, longer then they had of living.

Particularly, There is the bounds and limits of Gods mercy, *God will not alwaies ſtrive with man.*

Secondly Obſerve that the Reaſon is ſet downe by way of aggravation, *For that man is alſo fleſh.* As if it had beene ſaid, not onely that baſe generation of *Cain* that had caſt away the Law of God, and made Luſt their Law, but even *Seths* Poſteritie, Even thy ſervants (O Lord) that profeſſe the Faith, and have the worſhippe and Ordinances of God, they even they alſo are fleſhly and ſenſuall; not one- 2

ly *Rome*, *Spaine*, *Italy*; and *Turkes*, but *England* thy people that have beene baptized profeſſed thy truth, enjoyed thy Ordinances, They are looſe and prophane; So that this alſo apparantly implies not onely *Cains* Poſteritie, the wicked, but *Seths* Seede, the *Church* of God, members of the viſible Church; theſe, though profeſſing the truth, depart from the truth, & practiſe the abominations of the wicked.

Before we come to the ſeverall paſſages of the Text, we muſt unfold the words.

Firſt, what is meant by ſpirit here, it is the Holy Ghoſt, for God owneth this ſpirit, *My Spirit*, The third Perſon in the glorious *Trinity*; Now God ſtriveth, not only miraculouſly or immediately by

by Divination, but moſt uſually, and now mediately by the Miniſtery of his Word. God ſtrove with this generation of the old World by the Miniſtery of *Enoch* and *Noah*, the Lord immediatly aſſiſting and adviſing them, they ſpoke not their owne words, but ſuch as Gods Spirit put into their mouthes, 2 *Pet.* 1. the laſt ver. *Holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt*, ſo that by ſpirit here is meant the Spirit of God, and by that ſpirit in the Miniſtery of the *Patriarks* and *Prophets*, the Lord ſtrove with the men of the old world, and former Ages.

Secondly, what is meant by ſtriving; The Greeke Interpretors tranſlates the word ſo as it hath no agreement

with the word Spirit, and indeed we ſhall rather aime at it then explicate it.

The word is taken from a Theame which ſignifieth to judge, or condemne in judgeing, but it is not here meant in judgment, but a debating of the matter betweene God and a ſinner. Now, if God ſhould call a man to accompt and enter into judgment with a ſinner, who is able to ſtand before him? what man may contend with him that is mightier? *Eccleſia:* 6. 10. *No man is able to abide God or contend with him in judgment.* But God here deales with man anſwerable to the nature of a man, not with blowes, but with reaſonings and diſputes, He, as it were, enters a Law Caſe with the poore ſinne-

ſinneſull ſonnes of men, and proceedes in a judiciall courſe to recover a poore ſinner from the pathes of death wherein hee ſtraied, to his owne worſhip which the ſinner wholly declined from; as yee ſee men goe to Law, one ſaith the Land is mine, another ſaith hee hath beſt right to it, and ſo their title comes legally to be tried: Even ſo ſinne and Satan ſay the ſoule are theirs, and the ſinner is content to goe with with them to Hell, but the Lord enters liſts, and claimes by a higher title, and ſaith that the ſoule is his; by him it was created, Redeamed, made to honour his Creator, to be happy in his Saviour: And how God ſtrives herein you ſhall ſee afterwards. But

I take this to be the value of the ſence, ſo that from the firſt part of the Text, obſerve theſe foure Doctrines.

1. *The Spirit of God doth ever undoubtedly and unſeperably accompany the Miniſtry of the Word:* Gods Word and his Spirit alwayes goe together.

2. *The Lord by the power of his Spirit in the Word, in the courſe of his Providence, ſtrives with poore rebellious Sinners for their good, and they oppoſe both his Spirit and their own good.*

3. *God ſtriveth long with Sinners,* here with the old world one hundred ¡ and twentie yeares.

4. *Though God ſtrives long with Sinners, and yet they returne not, God will leave them to themſelves, and their ſinnes*

to

to the power and curſe of ſinne, and the judgements and plagues deſerved.

Of the firſt Doctrine, *viz.*

That Gods Spirit doth ever accompany the Word and the Miniſtry thereof. 1.

By the Spirit of God, I meane the eternall Spirit, the holy Ghoſt, doth in ſpeciall manner accompany the Word; know that God is every where, and knoweth all things, but in a ſpeciall manner he is with this; if the Word commands, hee commands, and if the Word forbids, he forbids, *Rom.* 1.16. *The Goſpell is the power of God to the ſalvation of man.*

But how doth this appeare to be ſo?

I Anſwer, it appeareth in three things: Firſt, God doth

pleaſe

please to set this worke apart, to wit, the Ministry of the Word, to save and sanctifie our soules which all the learning in the world cannot do.

2. Secondly, the Lord by the power of his Spirit doth constantly and continually accompany this worke as hee thinks good, to be a confutation to the wicked, and a consolation to the godly, 2 *Cor.* 2.16,17. To the one it is a savour of death, to the other it is a savour of life; it either kills the soule, or saves the soule, though it ever accompanies the word, yet this work of the Spirit is a voluntary worke.

3. Thirdly, it doth alwayes accompany the Word, but doth not alwayes worke; for some after twenty or thirtie yeares are converted, so that it

it doth not alwayes worke. Looke as the brazen Serpent was lift up in the wilderneſſe that whoſoever looked on it that was ſtung with the fiery Serpents ſhould be healed: there was a healing vertue in it, he ſet it apart for that purpoſe; for that had no vertue of it ſelfe, but becauſe God would worke by it, ſo that whoſoever looked on it might be healed: ſo it is with the Word of God: for the Miniſters thereof are no more able to convert then others, but becauſe God hath promiſed to accompany them in diſpenſation of it.

Reaſon. Firſt taken from the fruit and effect of this Word, that it is able to doe all things: In the beginning it was able to doe that which men *Reaſ.*

men and Angells cannot doe, *Heb.4.12. The Word of God is quick and powerfull, and ſharper then any two edged Sword, piercing even to the deviding aſſunder of the ſoule and Spirit, and a diſcoverie of the thoughts of the heart.* It is Gods faithfull word, the reaſon why Carnall men fall out with the Miniſters of the word, and ſay, you ſpeake againſt mee, I know you meane mee. No, no, we know not your hearts, but God doth, and the word of God knows them and that findes you out, *Iohn 5. 25. The dead ſhall heare the voice of the Sonne of God*, the meaning is, they that are dead in ſins: for by Nature everie man is dead in ſinne. It muſt be more then all men can doe, as our Saviour ſaid to *Lazarus*, when men

men ſtood weeping by, but Chriſt ſaid *Lazarus* come forth, *Joh.* 11.43. It muſt be Gods Word that muſt raiſe us from the death of ſinne to the life of righteouſneſſe.

Vſe. Firſt of Inſtruction to take heede of taking up of Armes againſt the Spirit of God, we ſee the hainous ſin of them that deſpiſe the Miniſtrie of the Goſpell, men may thinke it nothing; but alas, you know not what it is: for the word of God, and the Spirit of God goe together, as the bleſſed Martyr *Steven* ſaid to the Jewes, *Act.* 7. 51. *Ye ſtiffenecked and uncercumſiſed in heart and eares, yee doe alwayes reſiſt the holy Ghoſt as did your Fathers ſo doe you,* therefore take heede, you are neere to the ſinne againſt the holy

holy Ghoſt: for it is not the Word of man, but the Word of God, it is the Spirit that thou ſhouldſt be ſaved by, that thou haſt oppoſed; you goe away with the contempt of the Goſpell, and make that nothing, thou haſt ſinned againſt God and his Spirit that accompanies the Word: O Counſell one another, ſay, doe you know what you do? It is Gods Spirit, that muſt comfort you? that muſt ſave you; It is that that you oppoſe: when you oppoſe the word, take heede, for this is above inceſtuous ſinnes. *Luke* 3. 19. 20. *Herod* was an inceſtuous ſinnner, but above all his ſins he added this, that he put *John* in priſon: he was an inceſtuous Adulterer, yet putting *John* in priſon was above

bove all, *Math.* 11. 21. 22. *It ſhall be eaſier for Sodome and Gomorrah in the day of Judgment then for you that oppreſſe the word of the Lord.* So much for the firſt point.

And now I will faſten upon the ſecond point, which I conceive is the pith and ſubſtance, even the maine life of the Text; *viz. That the Lord by the power of his Spirit in the word ſtriveth with poore ſinners for their good, and they in the meane time oppoſe both his Spirit and their owne good.* The Parties are God and man; God ſtrives, and the ſinner ſtrives, The Lord invents wayes to work off the Soule from its ſinnes, and its deſtruction, and the Sinner makes it his maine peece and care, his cheife skill and cunning

ning to hinder the good word of the Lord, in the worke upon his ſoule for his ſalvation. In common experience wee ſee it, If God open the eies of a Drunkard, or awaken the Adulterer, what a deale of ſtirre there is; One drinkes it off; another plaies it out, a third dambes up his Soule withuntempered mortar; Any thing, or any way, that the good Spirit of the Lord may not prevaile. If the Lord turne the face of a child or a ſervant in the familie towards him, then preſently there is hue and crie up by the Father or the Maſter; He is an undone man, or an undone woman; then there is labouring by all meanes poſsible to ſtifle the worke of grace in the heart: Thus when God ſtri-

veth

veth to pluck men out of their ſinnes, they continue in ſinne, and ſo ſubject themſelves to eternall puniſhment, therfore may the contention grow marvellous great, God ſtriveth, and ſinne and Satan ſtrive, and man holds it out to the laſt, As appeares *Math.* 23. 37. *O Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the Prophets, and ſtoneſt them that were ſent to thee, &c.* there is the buſineſſe, and marke, *how often would I have gathered you, &c. and you would not.* The Father would draw men to his Sonne to be ſaved, but *John.* 5. 4. *ye will not come unto me that ye may be ſaved:* whilſt our Saviour thus ſtrives with the cords of mercie to draw men to ſalvation, they labour to withdraw themſelves from him, and to plundge

plundge themſelves into damnation. *Act.* 18. 5,6. *Paul ſtrengthened with the ſpirit convinced them boldly, and by ſtrength of Argument laid hold upon their underſtandings proving that Jeſus was the Chriſt.* But they came as in pitcht battell againſt that Doctrine of life, and ſalvation, they did gainſay and blaſpheme it: the word in the originall ſignifies, *They planted forces in order, and came in battell array againſt thoſe bleſſed truthes he delivered:* and in other places of the *Acts*, when *Paul* revealed the truth, *part joyned with the Apoſtles, part with the Jewes, ſome were convinced, others gainſayed, and reſiſted.* See then how a poore ſinner breakes all the cords of grace and mercie, as *Pſalm.* 2. 3.

when

when there the wicked combine against Christ, say they, *Let us breake his Bonds asunder, and cast his Cords from us.* Gods Counsells, Commands, Reproofes, &c. are the cords they breake: the threatnings of the word, the checkes of Conscience, all the tyes of mercie, they snappe in peices, they breake all and wilfully withdraw themselvs from salvation, we neede no more witnesses to cast this cause, wofull experience daily produces too many; all difficulty rests in the Explication of this: And therin observe three things. 1.

First, I will discover how God drawes and strives with the sinner, what a deale of doe it is to bring a sinner to everlasting life. 2.

Secoudly,

Secondly, the reaſon why God doth ſo ſtrive.

Thirdly, Application hereof.

Firſt, how doth the Lord ſtrive? The good Spirit of the Lord followes a Suit himſelfe againſt a ſinner, and pleades a Law-Caſe with him. I doe confeſſe the dealing of God is marveillous ſtrange herein, and I ingeniouſly acknowledge I want both skill and heart to ſet forth the pleadings of God herein: But, he is onely able to ſpeake for himſelfe. and by his gratious aſsiſtance wee ſhall obſerve to you ſuch pleaes as God affords in Scripture, how the Lord hath dealt herein. To the point then. How the Lord pleades and ſtrives with a

ſinner,

ſinner, I referre to two heads.

1. By way of perſwaſion.

2. By way of conſtraint and compulſion.

Wherein we ſhall obſerve all the cords of mercie and bondes of compaſsion. Firſt, ſtriving, and if thoſe doe not prevaile, execution of puniſhment, terrours and a ſtrong hand purſues a ſinner in mercie, and at laſt, if all faile, mercy overcomes the ſinner; wherein ſee, God firſt diſcovers the matter in controverſie Proceedes to execution, and by repreive at laſt prevailes by mercy over judgement.

Touching the firſt part, and of the pleaes of mercy in ſcripture we muſt referre our

obſervation hereof to foure heads.

Firſt, As in a ſuite of Law before there can be a day of Heareing, the Party is ſummoned to anſwer.

So the Lord having a Controverſie with a ſinner, the Lord ſummons the ſinner into his Court, the Lord cauſeth a Writ to iſſue out to attach a ſinfull Creature that lieth ſnorting in his ſins, and ſecurely poſts to deſtruction, one that never ſaw his miſerie and wants, and never ſought for mercy and ſupply, Salvation being the furtheſt end of his thoughts, and the leaſt part of his care. Now the Lord doth bring this about in his providence, by bringing them to the word, and therein mercifully ma-

king

king knowne the ſinners eſtate before ever he imagined thereof. *Iſa: 65. 1. I was found of them that ſought mee not.* Hence in ordinarie experience many a poore ſinfull creature hath beene accidentally caſt into ſuch a Towne, or into a good familie, and the Lord comes upon him on a ſuddaine when he never dreamed of life and grace. As many a ſoule in the acknowledgment of Gods mercy and providence breakes out in this wonder, Oh that I ſhould be brought into ſuch a place, ſuch a familie, and meete with ſuch opportunities, when I dreamed of it as little as of doomes day and deſired nothing more then miſchiefe, that God ſhould ſtop

me in the way to *Hell*: See that of *Saul* when he was running to *Damascus*, ah (saith he) I will take these Puritaines in their Conventicles; a light shin'd suddenly from Heaven and almost tumbled him downe into *Hell*, Even such a kinde of light is let into the soule; not that we must expect a miracle, or a new thing, but when the word is brought home to the understanding, the soule will thinke those strange things, such as hee never heard or thought of.

And if the sinner growes careleſſe and will not attend, God calls upon the soule, and drawes the minde to attend, holds the light to the eye, and brings the Word so evident to the soule that it cannot

cannot evade, *Ezek.* 16. 2. *Sonne of man cause the Children of Israell to know their abominations.* The Prophet, 1 *Kings* 21. 20. having a Message to *Ahab* after his great wickednesse, see how the sight of the Prophet startles him, and makes him snarle, *Hast thou founde mee out? Oh mine Enemy*, saith *Ahab*. The worde findes a man out and drawes the minde to attend it. The soule would be careless and secure, will not heare, nor attend. The Lord knockes at the doore of the soule, findes him out behinde the Pillor, awakens him asleepe in his Pue, finds him out his sinnes, and discovers his abominations. The Lord comes home to the soule, and tells him

thou art the man that hath ſinned, and thou ſhalt bee plagued; God deales like a Wraſtler, firſt catches hold then comes in, and at laſt throwes a man upon his back makes him yeeld and confeſſe, I am the man. Thus the Lord cauſeth the minde to attende the word. The Lord tells the Drunkard that the Alehouſe is not the way to Heaven, and the Adulterour that his way leads to perdition, brings them to the word, and cauſeth them to attend thereto.

And further the Soule attending the word, and being ignorant and knowing no good, the Lord informes a ſinner and ſets up a light of wiſedome in his minde to conceive of the nature of ſinne.

finne, whereby he hath provoked God. He that yet never knew what ſinne was, now it ſtares him in his face, and he beholds it with amazement, and in ſome meaſure alſo comes to conceive of the nature of grace, he beginnes to ſee the excellencie of Faith and Repentance, what it is to bee in a Chriſt, what it is to want a Chriſt: the man is become an apprehenſive man (ſaith God) *I will cauſe the houſe of Iſraell to know their abhominations.* It is not ſufficient to come and heare the word, and never attend it, or conſider of it; But if God comes with it, it will make the Drunkard know what it is to be drunke, and the Diſſembler what it is to deale faſly with God and

his truth, *Job.* 36. 9. Hee ſhewes them their workes and their tranſgreſſions. God ſhewes a man his iniquities, God ſhewes a man his pride, his vanity of minde, the judgements threatned, the plague deſerved. Oh then, The ſinner ſaith, this is my ſinne, and this is the puniſhment due to mee, that is, the Nature of my abhomination, and that is the judgement of God for it. Thus I ſay the Lord takes hold of a ſinner; And this is the firſt way by ſummons or Subpena, If a ſinner be ſecure, God brings him to the word; if then careleſſe, God makes him attend; If ignorant, he informs him; As in a Law caſe, The man is not onely attatched to appeare, but when he appeares

peares there is a declaration of the fact; So the Lord shewes the soule what his sinnes are, what neede there is of Christ, grace, faith, and repentance, which hee never knew of before.

Secondly, Thus the Action being laid, oh, the sinfull heart invents marvellous strange shifts and evasions.

The day is appointed for the triall, what Lawyer doth the Soule get to plead his Cause? He sends for carnall reason, as *Pharaoh* sent for the Magicians, And when God hath opened his eyes, and discovered his soule to his soule, then he calls in, I say, the Magicians of carnall reason to plead against the word of God lest it should prevaile, or his sins should lie so heavy

upon him as to tire and weary him out of them. Firſt, it excuſeth the hainouſneſſe of ſinne, that the ſin was not ſo great, that though the Miniſter ſpeake as if we were all Saints, yet are we not all ſinners; who then ſhall goe unpuniſhed? we doe not looke to be ſaved by our ſelves or our workes, but by Jeſus Chriſt, and he came to ſave Sinners, It is but looking towards him, and crying God mercie at laſt; but, ſaith the Miniſter, we muſt be ſanctified as well as ſaved. *Acts.* 3. 26. God having raiſed up his Sonne Jeſus ſent him to bleſſe you in turning every one of you from his evill way: That is bleſſedneſſe; we muſt be reformed, if conforted; humbled, if glorified; What ſaith

ſaith the Sinner, muſt I forſake my evill waies? we know no man can, what need a man to be ſo preciſe and curious? Thus with theſe and many other pleaſe carnal reaſon, like a cunning Solicitour, with the helpe of the Divell, who will play the crafty Lawyer, and what the one can invent, and the other ſuggeſt will be ſurely pleaded to beate backe the power of the word. And tis admirable to conſider what contentions there are herein, and how the wicked heart of man will outbid all the meanes under heaven untill the ſpirit of God come in upon the ſoule, and then as the wiſedome of God informes a ſinner, ſo the ſpirit becoms the Advocate of God, that wile and holy

Spirit

Spirit by the Miniſtery of the word convinceth the ſinner, *Iohn* 16. 8. *And when he is come he will convince the world of ſinne*; he will anſwer all the pleaes and arguments that the ſinner can make. 2. *Cor.* 10. 4, 5. *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnall but mighty through God, to the pulling downe of ſtrong holds, Caſting downe immaginations and every high thing that exalteth it ſelfe againſt the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt*: when the ſoule cavills, what needes all this adoe. Shall not a man goe to Heaven unleſſe he pray, heare Sermons, and ſanctifie the Sabboth? Then the Spirit of God convinces a man

man fully, that he hath not a word to ſay againſt the evidence of truth, hee gives up the day, and ſaith, I confeſſe I am the man, theſe are my ſinnes, I muſt forſake theſe or periſh; nay, I muſt forſake all my ſinnes or elſe I forſake none: I ſee I cannot be a good Chriſtian and a ſwearer, a proud vaine perſon, a careleſſe liver, then a Heathen, a prophane Atheiſt will be as good a Chriſtian. Thus the action being laide by Information, and the ſinner caſt in the action by the Spirits conviction. Then

3. Leaſt the ſinner now in this eſtate apprehending his ſinnes and the hainouſneſſe of them, and of his deſperate forlorne eſtate thereby ſhould ſinke under his burthen, the

Lord

Lord lets in the manifeſtation of his goodnes into his ſoule, and the Soule thinkes with it ſelfe how good is God in his providence to provide the meanes of grace to bring me under them, to ſhew mee my wanderings, Ah ſinfull, loſt, undone creature; And yet the Goſpell of grace and the word of grace invites me to mercie. Oh, Is it poſſible that ſuch a ſoule as mine ſhould be recovered? That I am yet alive, yet on this ſide hell, yet enjoy theſe meanes? *Rom*: 2. 4. *The goodneſſe of the Lord leadeth unto repentantance*, and it incourageth the ſinner both to comfort and amendment: doth the Lord vouchſafe mee theſe mercies? why not my heart purged? why not my corrupt

corrupt Natures cleanſed? why Lord, thou waſt merciſull to *Manaſſes* who after all his wickedneſſe repented and received mercy.

4. If yet the ſinner ſhall turne this goodneſſe of God into wantonneſſe, and pervert the meanes of grace unto by ends, becauſe he is yet in ſtrength and health, doth and will continue ſtill in his ſinnes, delaies his repentance, Repentance will be ſoone enough hereafter. That the wiſedome of God groweth almoſt reſolved to forſake him, becauſe all the wayes thereof for the ſinners reformation are neglected, The goodneſſe of God is reſolved to incourage him no more becauſe deſpiſed: yet the patience of God commeth in, and

and when the Lord is even leaving the finner, and Juſtice taking hold of vengeance, the bleſſed patience of God ſteps in and pleades, and enters a new ſuccor, It intreates the Lord to ſtay one yeare longer.

When the Lord came three yeares to the Figetree, *Luke* 13.7. and found no fruit, *Cut it downe* (ſaith the Lord) nay, ſtay Lord, (ſaith the Keeper of the Vineyeard) another yeare it may beare. So that Gods patience prevailes, that God doth not yet proceede in juſtice and execute judgement. *Hoſ.* 11. 8, 9. *How ſhall I give thee up, O Ephraim? how ſhall I deliver thee, Iſraell? how ſhall I make thee as Admah? how ſhall I ſet thee as Zeboim? mine hart is turned within*

in

in mee, my repentings are kindled together, I will not execute the fiercenesse of mine anger, &c. See how patience pleades for a poore creature, Oh Lord, this poore sinner hath delayed, but he will now resolve, he hath put off the time, but now he hath promised that all things shall be amended: now indeed he will set upon the worke of Reformation of himselfe and his family. Lord, try him one moneth, one yeare longer, and he will pray in his familie, sanctifie the Sabboth, and live holily, and strictly. But, yet if through the patience of the Lord the sinner groweth more careles, he hath promised faire, but indeavoures not to amende, continues not in these good re-

reſolutions, but is more vaine and ſecure, patience beginneth to be wearie. *Ierem.* 5. 6, 7. *Their tranſgreſſions are many, and their backſlidings are increaſed. How ſhall I pardon thee for this?* Patience is at a ſtand, comes to a period. How ſhall I ſpare? I can goe no further, Then cometh in the long ſufferance of God, and though the contempt, neglect, and careleſneſſe of a ſinner is continued, yet God indures, *Ierem.* 13. in the laſt verſe, *VVoe unto thee, Oh Ieruſalem, wilt thou not be made cleane? when ſhall it once be?* 140. yeares here in the Text. Oh that the Lord ſhould beare with a man untill he be an old gray-headed ſinner; Oh this long ſufferance of God is admirable; If not for this

this, long before this day we had beene all consumed, *Jer.* 15. 6. *I am weary with repenting.* Oh ye ancient sinners, ye gray-headed and stout-hearted sinners, so many yeares to continue in your sinnes, That God is not onely weary of your swearing, blasphemies and prophanes, But his long sufferance also is even come to a date. *Forty yeares long was I greived with this generation: Psal.* 95. 10. What forty yeares together a Contemnor of Gods word, a Despiser of the meanes of grace, and yet spared? See, and wonder then poore sinner, how thou laboures to get the better of God, and to out tire his patience, And yet God beares and indures to gather up: when the sinner was

was careleſſe and ignorant, the Lord did awaken and informe him; when the ſinner was quarelſome and contentious, the Lord did convince and caſt him: when the ſoule might be diſcouraged and deſpaire, the Lord did quicken and raiſe him up, yet the ſinner delayed, and God did beare, the ſinner falſifyed his promiſe, and God did indure: And, what ſhall theſe faire promiſes come to nothing? Didſt not thou thinke and reſolve to leave thy ſinnes, to take up a new courſe? Remember the time, the place, the bed of ſickneſſe, the Miniſtery of the word, At ſuch a Sermon, under ſuch a croſſe, Didſt not thou at ſuch a time before, thou wenteſt out of the Congregation ſay with

with thy ſelfe, now if it pleaſe the Lord, this good word of God ſhall prevaile. I will forſake my luſts, I will never walke in any former courſes; But alas, all is forgot, and the Lord ſaith, have I thus long indured, and ſhall I indure you to continue ever in ſinne? Now patience and long ſufferance are both for vengeance; God can, will not indure longer; now he comes to execution, *Iſa.* 1. 24. when the Lord was tired with their abhominations, *Ah, ſaith the Lord, I will eaſe mee of mine adverſaries, and avenge mee of mine enemies.* As who ſhould ſay, I will now take hold of vengeance, and that Drunkard and looſe perſon that would not forſake his Cuppes and his Queanes, but

but continue ſtill in their filthy beaſtlineſſe, I will eaſe me of them with ſuddaine deſtruction, and that falſe diſſembling profeſſor that made a ſhew of godlineſſe, but denied the power, I will eaſe me of him, and ſpue him out with ſhame to his face, and horror to his conſcience.

But of this in three particulars.

Firſt, the fierceneſſe of the furie of the Lord breakes in upon the ſinner, and the Lord lets in the veines of vengeance, and his heavie diſpleaſure upon the conſcience, and like a Purſevant breakes through the Chamber doore, and the wrath of God ſaith, come away to Hell, away ſuddenly, goe downe to everlaſting deſtruction, *Pſal.* 42. 7.

All

All thy waves and thy billowes are gone over me.

He that was a kinde loving friend, now is become a terrible enemie, and purſues as fiercely as he perſwaded mercifully, *Job.* 15. 24, 25. *Trouble and anguiſh ſhall make him afraide, they ſhall prevaile againſt him, as a King ready to battell, For he ſtretcheth out his hand againſt God, and ſtrengtheneth himſelfe againſt the Almighty.* But though *Pharaoh* ſaid, *who is the Lord,* (*Exod*: 5. 2.) *that I ſhould let them goe, that I ſhould obey his voyce*; yet God ran upon him, even upon his necke, even upon the thicke boſſes of his bucklers, and cruſht the pride and vanity of his ſoule. The poore ſinner when he was informed in his judgment,

ment, convinced in his conſcience, and ſtriven with by much patience, and long ſufferance ſtretched out to the utmoſt, yet what though the Miniſter told him of plagues and threatnings, Come (ſaith he) let us drinke &c. what though they ſay we muſt goe to hell and periſh, we ſee no ſuch matter, thus out-faceing the Almighty, and out-braveing Gods Miniſters: and they are ſturdy, and will be ſo ſturdy ſtill, and rebellious, and ſo ſtill continue; well, doe they thinke to carrie it away thus? The Lord will runne upon them, and cruſh them to peices: the Lord doth not take advantage, but when the ſinner is ſtrongeſt, ſtouteſt, when his pride is ſhameleſſe and impudent, and he ruffles

ruffles it out in deſpight of Miniſter, Magiſtrate, and all bonds, Then God will be even with him. Becauſe he covers his face with fatnes, becauſe he is carnall, careleſſe, goes away, eates, drinkes, riots, takes content in a ſecure, ſenſuall, ſtubborne courſe: the Lord will runne upon their browes, terrifie the conſcience, and confound his impudence: thus, when the ſinner ſeemes moſt ſtrong and ſecure in ſinne, God will be moſt keene and ſtartle the ſoule. And thus the ſoule comes firſt to be arreſted.

Secondly, the wrath of God further ſends for the ſinner, and drags him to priſon, and when he is in priſon caſts him into the Dungeon, Juſtice and Gods truth come to

take the forfeiture of all favours and mercies heretofore enjoyed, and not profited by: and as one that is caſt into priſon, then action upon action, and execution upon execution is laid upon a man until they breake his backe, an undone man for ever (as we ſay ſo with the Juſtice of God, *Pſal.* 50. 21, 22. *Theſe things thou haſt done, & I kept ſilence, and thou thoughteſt I was ſuch a one as thy ſelfe.* Thou didſt not thinke I heard thee in ſuch a Taverne ſpeaking againſt God, his people, his waies: marke, *I held my tongue*; Oh the patience of God: and his forbearance of ſinners in the midſt of their wickedneſſe, They prophaned Gods Sabboth, and yet proſpered, they thought *God did not reguard it*,

God

God allowed it; they deſpiſed his holy ones, and lived in jollity, and thought God did not ſee it, But all theſe backe-reckonings, and forfeitures, and all their abominations are now ſet in order before their eyes. *Conſider this ye that forget God, leaſt I teare you in peices, and there be none to deliver you.*

Ah, the good Spirit of God; ah, the goodneſſe of God, his patience, his long ſufferance: Everie one of theſe comes in and enters an action againſt the ſoule: theſe that ſhould refreſh my ſoule, relinquiſh it, nay, they aggravate my anguiſh and torment, *Job* 14. 16, 17. *For now thou numbreſt my ſteps, doſt thou not watch over my ſinne? My tranſgreſsions are ſealed up in a bag, and thou*

ſoweſt up mine iniquitie.

Remember ſuch a time what thou didſt, and how I did forbeare, but I will forbeare no longer, and at laſt Juſtice with a full ſwindge brings in all the bonds and all recknings, all thoſe exhortations that have beene ſlighted, reproofes ſcorned, meanes of grace enjoyed, and not bettered by, and thoſe antient multiplyed and great tranſgreſſions; theſe all will breake the back of mountains, and rocks are not able to beare off the billowes of the wrath thus kindled; and thus the ſoule is in priſon and under execution, and there like to lie, and rot, and periſh.

Yet againe, and at laſt caſt, after the wrath of God hath thus arreſted the ſoule, and the juſtice and truth and mercie

and patience and the forbearance of God hath laid action upon action upon the ſoule, and the ſoule is in execution, everlaſting ruine being ready to ſeize on it, then mercy bayles the ſinner, even the mercy of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt comes in, and undertakes that the ſoule ſhall appeare or mercie will ſatisfy for him, ſo the ſinner is yet reprived, Mercy gets the day, when a ſinner comes out of the horror of conſcience, and the devourings of juſtice. Oh the bowells of mercy: Oh the mercy of a Father: the bloud of a Chriſt, the comfort of the Spirit calls the ſoule out of priſon. *Oh turne, why will ye dye, Ezek.* 18. 13. Remember the knocks and horrors of conſcience, the beginnings of hell: they all come

and mourne over a ſinner. Oh ye Drunkard, turne, be drunke no more, come to mee and be ſaved: ſo to the proud prophane rebellious and malicious ſinners, why will ye yet oppoſe God, and ſo ever be confounded by him? why will ye goe to hell, O ye ſinfull ſonnes of men? Come to me and I will pardon your ſinnes, Come to me and I will ſatisfie and pay all your debts, ſaith Gods Spirit, I will ſubdue, cruſh all your Rebellions. Oh this, this is the laſt time. Now obſerve, if ye come in, receive all the good offered, If ye now be a ſervant to the Lord your God, all your former iniquities ſhall be pardoned, old arrerages ſhall not be laid to your charge. By me (ſaith Chriſt, beleeve, and ye ſhall be juſtifyed from all things

things, *Act.* 13. 39. Now obſerve this is the laſt ſtroke, the laſt period, the ſuit is at an end, if you entertaine mercy to pardon ye, the bloud of Chriſt to ſatisfie for you, the motions of the Spirit to quicken you: Tis well, if not now what can be looked for, but fire from Heaven to deſtroy Gods Adverſaries. Thus you ſee how God ſtrives and wraſtles hard before he brings men to repentance and ſalvation.

The upſhot of all is this, the Lord finding a ſinner careleſſe and ſecure by his word, gives him notice of his waies, when he hath the word he makes him attend, attending awakens and informes him. The ſinner ſeeing his Eſtate begines to wrangle with God, then God convinces him, when convinced,

leaſt hee ſhould ſit downe in diſpaire, comforts him, and being incouraged, the ſinner againe groweth careleſſe, and delaies the time; God waites, he abuſeth Gods patience, and yet his long ſufferance indureth, and yet not work effectually: then God is put to it, & with a ſtrong hand layes hold on a ſinner, and ſets his wrath to arreſt a ſinner, and Juſtice binds him over to judgement, yet at laſt Mercy comes in, offers grace, pardon of ſins, and ſalvation in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. This is the purſuit of the Law-Caſe.

The Reaſons why God ſtrives with ſinners thus, are briefely:

Firſt, that he might expreſſe and glorifie his attribute of Mercy, and that the world might know it, & rejoyce in it.

Secondly,

Secondly, that he might leave the world without excuſe, that if they goe downe to the bottomleſſe pit they muſt thanke themſelves.

But, to come to the Vſes. We ſee what God doth, how he ſtriveth with a ſinner, for his everlaſting wellfare, and we ſee what the poore ſoule doth ſtrive with God for his owne eternall ruine, that the great Creatour that was happy before all worlds, and will be glorified if he ſhould ſuffer thouſand millions of us to periſh, and go down to hell, ſhould ſtrive with a poore ſinfull creature, tis admirable.

Firſt, we ſee, and let us ſtand amazed, and wonder at the admirable goodneſſe, the riches of the kindneſſe of the Lord, together with the

depth of the ſtubbornneſſe, rebellion, and evill of the ſoule, how ſtrong in wickedneſſe to ſtrive with the God of Heaven, nay, ſeemeth (as we ſay with reverence) to get the better. The Lord teacheth, and he will not heare; the Lord convinceth, and he will not yeeld; the Lord is good to him, and he deſpiſeth him; the Lord is patient, and he abuſeth it; God beares long and he contemnes: were it not that God is juſt as well as patient, the ſinner would overcome God, but God will not have his patience alwayes wronged: But yet obſerve the baſeneſſe and depth of the wretchedneſſe of mans heart, that nothing will do him good: foule is the Leaper that all the water in the ſea

will not waſh: Great are the ſpots that nothing wil cleanſe or take off; what ſtate is that body in, that no diet will nouriſh, no phiſicke cure? Death muſt needs appeare in his face, it is thy eſtate and mine. Let us goe home and reaſon with our ſelves in ſecret: Good Lord, what a heart have I, Is there ſuch an heart in hell? The Divell never had that patience to ſtrive with them, that mercy to cure them, the good Spirit of God to ſtrive with them, Oh! the Lord hath called and revealed himſelfe to me; yea, found me when I ſought him not, nay, cauſed me to ſee mine abominations, made me to ſee the wickedneſſe of my waies: yet, oh the ſecret grudges of my heart that it bore

bore to Religion. How did I taunt the professours thereof, and loathed the profession therof it selfe; yee are one of those holy ones, & what shall I be so precise? yet the Spirit of God did not leave me, but laid hold on me, surprized me in my bed, and followed me whereseever I went, yet I opposed all, did winde away from the power of the truth, grieved the good Spirit of God: good Lord, what a heart have I, and good reason hast thou to be ashamed of such a base heart. A poore worme, sinful dust and ashes, a shadow, a miserable hell-hound to grapple with the Almightie, thus to strive against mercy & patience, and not to be tumbled into the bottomlesse pit of hell. Tis admirable,

ble unſpeakable mercie. Let us ſee into the depth of our miſery, and weepe if we had a fountaine of ſorrow. See, there is a Drunkard, God hath opened his eies, and he is become an holy gracious Chriſtian: Looke here upon a wretched Adulterer, yet a wonder of mercie. Doth he that goeth into an harlot ever returne? yet the Lord hath pardoned all his abominations. Beholdſt thou thy ſelfe to ſtand ſtill like a horſe in a Mill, as vaine, as vile, as careleſſe and wicked as ever, Oh wonder at Gods goodneſſe and be aſhamed and confounded at thy deſperate caſe and wretchedneſſe.

Behold from hence the condemnation of the wicked to be marvellous juſt, they *Uſe 2.*

have

have their owne deſires as deſerts; they are damned, becauſe they will be damned; periſh, becauſe they will periſh. It is ſtrange to obſerve the madnes of men to ſtrive to goe downe to hell: they take Poſt-horſe to everlaſt-laſting deſtruction, ſtrive who ſhall goe firſt. They ſtrive who ſhall be moſt vaine, malicious, gainſay the truth, oppoſe God and goodneſſe; well, the Lord hath ſtriven with you, and you have ſtriven againſt him, and ye will goe to hell, and then that patience that hath ſtriven with you will ſtop every one of your mouthes, when the body ſhall lie downe in the duſt, and the ſoule be roareing in the bottomleſſe pit. Now ye have your owne deſires,

ſires, you have worne your owne Garland; ye would be proude and ſtubborne, looſe and prophane contemning all meanes of Reformation: now ye have your belly full of ſinning, *Prov.* 30. 31. *The Lord will ſatisfy them with their owne wayes, and fill them full of their owne devices.* As who ſhould ſay, yee ſhall have your owne hearts content, ye would have none of his Councell, ye deſpiſed all his reproofe, and ye will deſpiſe the word, oppoſe the Miniſter, ſcorne God to his face, deſpight his Spirit, reſiſt the worke of the Lord, ſhift, put off, and put backe the Authority of the truth, and the power of grace; well, when ye are full low in the bottomleſſe pit, then ye ſhall have

have elbow roome enough, liberty and time to be full of all evill, for ever to ſinne againſt, and blaſpheme God for ever, and juſt will God be in his Judgments.

Uſe 3. The third uſe is of reproofe, Doth God ſtrive with ſinners for their good and ſalvation, what ſhall we thinke of them that ſtrive with men for their hurt and ruine, either God muſt be blamed for dealing ſo, or they condemned for ſtanding in oppoſition with God, judge you; I will ſay nothing. The Lord ſtrives, he uſeth mercie, juſtice, goodnes, & all means to draw ſinners to him, and ſo to be ſaved; and theſe endeavour by all meanes, threatning, taunts, councells, and examples to withdraw men from God,

his

his waies and ſervice; certainly, either God is to be blamed for dealing ſo, or they to be condemned in their miſchiefes. They are the Divells Captaines, and give preſſe money, nay, his Brokers; if a wife, childe, or ſervant, or neighbour begines to looke towards Heaven, then the husband frownes, the Maſter chides, the freind forſakes. Oh, lay your hands on your hearts, the divell if incarnate could doe no more. Oh know not only that thine owne ſinnes ſhall condemne thee, but the bloud of your wives, children, and ſervants; Oh brethren, I beſeech you heare, feare and tremble. *Acts* 15. 8, 9. The text ſaith, that *Paul* came to the Iland, and found the Deputie

puty of the Iland desirous to heare the word of God, *Paul* would have brought him to the faith, and *Elimas* would have drawne him from the faith: marke what *Paul* saith in the 10th verse, *thou childe of the devill*: because *Elimas* would not goe to hell himselfe alone, he drawes others. and *Paul* comes with fire and thundring, as it were, *Oh, child of the Divell, O Enemy of all righteousnesse.*

The Adulterer is an enemy to chastity, the Drunkard to soberneſſe, the unjuſt man is an enemy to juſtice, but they that ſtrive to hinder any man from God are enemies to all righteouſneſſe. But you will ſay you would have prayed but my husband would not let me, I would have gone to Church

Church, but my Maſter would not let me, this will not ſerve the turne, it will be no plea for you to ſay Maſters hinder you, *Mat.* 23. 15. Woe to you Scribes and Phariſees that compaſſe Sea and Land to make a Proſelyte, and when hee is ſo made, you make him twofold more the childe of the Devill, then your ſelves. To be the children of the Devill that is bade enough in conſcience, but you are twice more the child of the Divell, if you hinder any from God: if you ſinne, you ſhall goe to hell, but they that occaſion others to ſinne, ſhall be twice more the children of hell then you; Oh, then feare and labour everie one to amend one another.

For

Vſe 4. For exhortation, Doth the Lord ſo ſtrive, and uſe all meanes to draw us to him, doth God doe ſo? Then doe you ſo alſo whereſoever thou goeſt, doe thou ſtrive to perſwade men and draw them from evill, *Heb.* 3. 13. *Exhorting one another daily*: Imitate God and Chriſt, they ſtrive with poore ſinners for their good, doe thou ſo ſtrive with men, yea though they ſtrive againſt thee. Thou haſt a wicked father, a prophane mother, pray for them: thy freinds and kindred are opposers of God and his worſhip, exhort them; if thou ſeeſt for the preſent little hopes of amendment, continue thy prayers for them: thou prayeſt once, pray againe, it may be God will heare; when a man

man is laid in his grave, yet his ſtock of prayers remaines, and goes forward, and ſhall doe till doomes day; what a ſweete comfort will this be to them that doe good to others; you therefore that goe in companies and aſſemblies with others, ſtrive to draw them on in goodneſſe by exhortations, and ſometimes by reproofes, that if it be poſſible you may prevaile with their hearts to come in and take mercie, 2. *Tim.* 2. 25, 26. Laſtly, therefore what remaines? Oh that I could follow Gods ſuite, be intreated and exhorted in the Lord: Doth the Lord ſtrive with you, what ſhould you doe but yeeld to the Lord? Strive no more againſt him, contend no further with the Almighty, Let this

this adviſe be acceptable, and the Lord make it powerfull to you. The Lord hath a great ſuite, many yeare it hath laſted; a Chauncerie ſuite, it hath laſted ten, twenty, forty yeares: Oh ye of ancient yeares, with reverence to yeares, be perſwaded to the feare of the Lord. Oh ye young ones bleſſe God, that ye have not ſo long reſiſted the worke of Gods grace, and withſtood his patience. The Lord hath an old Controverſie with you from your firſt birth to this preſent. That of *David, Oh God from my youth I have depended upon thee.* Oh what Sabboths haſt thou enjoyed, what Sermons haſt thou heard, what ſweete opportunities for thy ſoul have beene afforded thee? Oh the bleſſed

bleſſed motions of the good Spirit of God? how hath God ſent and ſued to thee, purſued and followed thee, mercies on the one hand inviting thee, juſtice on the other ſide threatning, comforts of minde, and horrors of conſcience? Oh at laſt heare and be perſwaded to let the ſuite fall, Oh eſpecially yee ancient ſinners, notwithſtanding all this, yet to be an ancient Drunkard, an old blacke mouthed ſwearer, an ancient Adulterer, an old grayheaded ſinner ſetled in wickedneſſe; the father naught, and the ſonne naught, ah, vile wretches, the bane of all goodneſſe: The Lord hath ſtriven forty, fifty, ſixty years together, and doe you not thinke the Lord was admi-

mirably patient? Now, now let the word of the Lord prevaile, and the Councell of Gods poore ſervants take place with you, for your eternall good. Thinke with your ſelves, what ſhall I ſtand out in law with God? ſhall I ſtill reſiſt his grace? Goe into a corner and ſigh, and ſorrow: bewaile your ſelves; ah, miſerable Creatures that we are, how have we behaved our ſelves all our life time to God: ah, thoſe cords of mercie that would not draw us, thoſe powerfull perſwaſſions thoſe keene reproofes, thoſe forcible exhortations, and thoſe beſtowed and continued with much goodneſſe and long ſufferance, and we not bettered by any of them to this very day: why then it i

high time (poore wretches) to lay downe the ſuite, to renounce it and to yeeld to the word of God, and not a word more. Give up the day to the worke of Gods grace, and the power of his Spirit, as *Job*, *Job.* 39. 37, 38. though he held out long untill the Lord ſchooled him out of the whirlwinde, ſhewed him his Glory and Power and *Jobs* vileneſſe and nothingneſſe. *Then he cries out I am vile, what ſhal I anſwer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth, once* (ſaith he) *have I ſpoken but I will anſwer no more*; So all of yee ſay that heare the word of God this day, and perſwade one another: Say we have beene Brethren in wickedneſſe, but now we will ſubmit, we will no longer deferre well then be incouraged. Th:

Lord ſtrives with you, nay hee promiſeth you if you will at laſt yeeld, whatſoever hath been formerly amiſſe ſhall bee pardoned: whatſoever is or ſhall bee wanting ſhall be ſupplied: why will yee yet contend, Did ever any reſiſt the Lord and proſper? Oh yee have freinds or eſtates, and yee beare your ſelves upon theſe and the like ſtayes; theſe, and all ſuch are but broken ſtaies. Where are all the enemies of God? where is ſtouthearted and ſtiffe-necked *Pharaoh*? Hee would not let the people of God goe, &c. His body was drowned in the ſea, and his ſoule is roaring in hell, unleſſe God was more infinitely mercifull then we can conceive: What became of proud *Nebuchadnezzar*

chadnezzar that exalted himselfe to the Heaven, he was brought as low as Hell, How doth God many times slay the drunkard, and cut off the sinner on a suddaine? And good Lord what are become of their soules? Therefore let everie man consider, no man can resist God and prosper, either thou must overcome God, or be confounded by him. Consider also, the longer ye stand out with God, the harder to agree the suite, and remember this yee strong ones.

A Law suite at the first might happily be ended for a small summe or nothing; but if it proceede, the charges of suite many times growes to be greater then the debt: Alſo thinke of this also ye ancient

ners, gray-headed ſweaners, conſtant ſecret oppoſers of God and goodneſſe: But forget it not (I ſay againe) yee young ones, little ones, goeing on in a way of ſinning. If yee doe not agree betimes with God, God will recover his charges, he will not loſe all thoſe exhortations, reproofes, his patience, goodneſſe, loving kindneſſe, the mercie and bloud of Chriſt: Chriſt paid deare for theſe, ye make nothing of the abuſe of all theſe, but Chriſt paid for everie Sermon not profitted by, everie intimation of Spirit ſlighted, everie mercie not improved; Oh, this is able to undoe any man. Oh poore people be wiſe in time, eſpecially I ſay ye young ones, your reckoning is not yet ſo heavie

heavy; if now ye get a hear to yeeld to the Councells and Reproofes of God, to ſubmit and come in, your ſinnes ſhall be pardoned, your perſons accepted, and your ſoules eternally ſaved: if not, thou muſt pay charges, anſwer for all the patience, long ſufferance, and goodneſſe of God. And conſider now, even this day the Lord holdeth out the Golden Scepter of grace, and if ye yet returne to him, ye ſhall be accepted of him: it may be the laſt time you ſhall have an offer of mercie. How ſoone may Death ſeize on thy body, and then Judgement overtake thy ſoule: this may be the laſt day of thy living, much more of thy hearing the word. If ye now accept, all arrerages ſhall be forgot-

ten, God will lay downe his ſuite, all his anger and diſpleaſure will be laid aſide, He will put up all if yee entertaine his mercie and imbrace Chriſt. This may be the laſt offer. And doth the Lord offer mercie after all the ſtubborneſſe of the heart, after all unprofitableneſſe, after all the neglect of all the meanes of grace, after all thy drunkenneſſe and prophaneſſe, hypocriſie, after all thy ſinnes and wickedneſſe.

Yes, then heare what the Lord ſaith: Are ye content to forſake theſe, yes? Then the Lord will not forſake you: if ye will entertaine the Lord above all theſe, he will entertaine you: if ye lay downe your luſts and corruptions, he will imbrace you for

for ever in the everlasting Armes of mercie: Say, answer, and let every mans conscience answer, that I may returne my message.

Me thinkes none of you should be so senseleſſe, so unreasonable, so desperately wretched, as to stand out. Good Lord, shall all my evills be pardoned, if I be content to receive Christ and his mercie? will the Lord Jesus never leave me, if I be content to leave my sinnes? Good Lord take all my sins and throw them in a bottomleſſe pit, let me never see them againe. I will never more strive against thy word: Let thy word reveale my sins and subdue my sinfull soule: Let that good Spirit of thine come in and rule this heart of mine.

Now the buſineſſe is at an end, all controverſies ceaſe, when (therefore) occaſions ſhall come, temptations renew, corruptions ſtirre; Goe to God, and for ever remember this daies reſolution, and let the Lord take place in thy heart, and he will preſerve thee to ſerve him here, and eternally to be ſaved hereafter.

I ſhould proceede to the third and fourth Doctrins, but I am prevented by the time, I will onely name them in one and ſo conclude.

Though God ſtrives long with ſinners, he gives them a long time of repentance; ye ſee the old world an hundred and twenty yeares, and every knock in the Arke a Sermon of repentance, yet after the long abuſe of Gods mercie and

and patience, the large time of repentance, and unfruitfullneſſe under all the meanes of grace. The Lord ceaſeth to ſtrive with ſinners anie more, he takes either the meanes from them, or them from the meanes, or his bleſſing from both. God hath bounds of his bounty and patience, hitherto and no further he will ſtrive, but not alwaies: when his time is expired, not a jot or minute is further to be expected: As with the Sun it hath its time of increaſing, and ſo there is the ſpring and harveſt, it hath its time of decreaſing, and then blaſting, and winter: there is alſo a time of conſuming the ſtore, as of bringing it in: ſo it is with the Son of Righteouſneſſe, who hath a

time to receive, quicken, and ripen the graces of his people, and a time to leave men to hardneſſe of their hearts in the darkeneſſe of *Ægipt*. He will ridde them of his word, or in hearing they ſhall not heare. Gods ſeaſon of mercie doth not allwaies laſt; there is a Terme time and a vacation: the ſun-ſhine of Gods goodnes now comforts and makes grace to grow, the Goſpell is gon, and all mercie and comfort is gon; when *Ephraim* was gon to Idolatrie, *Hoſ.* 4. 17. God was alſo gon, nay, *Let him alone, ſaith God he is joyned to Idols*, let him make up his match with miſchiefe, let him have his belly full of ſinning, I will now no more ſtrive with him.

The Lord make us wiſe to

to know the day of our visitation, least he remove his Candlesticke from us, and he be seene no more, least he in his wrath goe away, and leave us to die and perish in our sinnes.

FINIS.

THE CARNALL MANS CONDITION.

Set forth in a *Sermon* on *Rom.* 1. 18.

By THOMAS HOOKER, late of CHELMSFORD in *Eſſex*, now *Miniſter* of the *Goſpell* in NEW-*ENGLAND.*

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THE CARNALL MANS CONDITION.

ROM. 1.18.

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodlineſſe and unrighteouſneſſe of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſſe.

IN the beginning of this Chapter, the Apoſtle *Paul*, by way of Preface, prepareth way for thoſe many excel-

excellent truths, that the Spirit of God had furnished him withall, to send to the Saints that were at *Rome*: And that those Heavenly Mysteries might take the deeper roote in their hearts, and find the better acceptance with them, In the first place he cleareth the Authority of his Calling, and that he came not before he was sent of God. ver. 1. *Paul a Servant of Jesus Christ, call-ed to be an Apostle, separated unto the Gospell of God.* And therefore being thus called, it became them to receive his doctrine, not as the notions of his owne braine, but as the Word of the immortall God.

Secondly, by way of insinuation he prayseth them for

that

that good progreſſe, that they had made in the faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, verſe 8.

Thirdly, He diſcovers the tenderneſs of his love and affection towards them, and his unceſſant and unwearied deſire to doe them good, from the ninth to the fixteenth verſe.

Fourthly, He laieth downe the maine point, the Criticall point, the hinge upon which all the reſt of his glorious building ſhould move, *viz.* That a man is juſtifyed in the Sight of God by faith and not by workes, which Propoſition he proveth, firſt by Scripture, ver. 17. *The juſt ſhall live by faith.*

Secondly, by force of Argument, in the words of the text,

text, ſhewing that no man can ſtand righteous before God, by workes, becauſe the beſt workes that a man can doe of himſelfe, are wicked and unjuſt, and therefore puniſhed of God, for all men out of Chriſt ſtand guilty both of ungodlineſſe and unrighteouſnes, & ſo are ſubject to condemnation, therefore they muſt needs ſeek righteouſneſſe in ſome other: his Argument runneth thus: If no man by the workes of the Law can appeaſe the Wrath of God, then by the workes of the Law, no man can be ſaved, but by the workes of the law, no man can appeaſe the Wrath of God, therefore by the workes of the Law, no man can be ſaved, this he propounds in the text, and pro-

proſecutes in the Chapter following.

In the words of the text, we may obſerve in the generall theſe two parts.

Firſt, that carriage and diſpoſition of heart that is in wicked men, towards the Truth of God. 1.

Secondly, Gods dealing with them, in requitall of that their carriage: they ſtand in oppoſition to the truth, *Holding it in unrighteouſneſſe.* God ſtands againſt them in a way of Wrath and Vengeance, they deale roughly with the truth, and God deales as rigorouſly with them. More particularly, here is firſt the ſubject, *The Wrath of God*, ſecondly, the object, *Ungodly and unrighteous men*, Thirdly, The Univer- 2.

niverſality of it, in this word *al*, God doth not deal partially; but *all*, be they what they may be, that *Hold the truth in unrighteouſneſſe, ſhall feele the Wrath of God*, no ſinne how little ſoever it ſeemeth to a carnall eye, ſhall eſcape it.

Fourthly, The place from whence this Wrath ſhall come, that is, *from Heaven.*

From the Method that the Holy Ghoſt uſeth in placing ungodlineſſe, before unrighteouſneſſe, we may learne,

Obſer. 1. *That Sinnes againſt the firſt table, are ſinnes of a deeper dye, of a ſadder nature, then Sinnes againſt the ſecond table.*

Obſer. 2 Secondly, in that it is ſaid, againſt *ungodlineſſe*, and not ungodly men, we learne, *That Gods Wrath is not primarily,*

rily, not principally, intended against mens persons, but against their sinnes and wicked waies.

Thirdly, in that it is said, they hold the *truth in unrighteousnesse*, we learne, *That the Gentiles naturally had that ingrafted in them, whereby they might come, in some degree, to the Knowledge of God, of the Almighty Power, greatnesse, goodnesse, and everlasting Nature of God, even by looking upon his Creatures, so that their own reason might condemn them, of their wickednesse both towards God and men.* *Obser.* 3.

For the clearer understanding of the words, wee are to consider.

First, What is ment by *the wrath of God:* The wrath of

of God is an act of Gods Juſtice, puniſhing wicked men, ſometimes it is put for the judgements themſelves, as plague, ſword, famine, and ſuch like; It is here ſet down in oppoſition to the *Righteouſneſſe* of God ſpoken of ver. 17. which is Gods mercifull goodneſſe, and gratious diſpenſations towards poore loſt men.

Secondly, what is meant *by truth*: by truth here is ment, the remainder of light, that was left in Man kinde, after the fall, that rubbiſh that was left upon the fall of that firſt glorious building, that Common light, that is in every mans conſcience, ſince the fall of *Adam* that ſerves to ſhew him what God is, in His Power, Glo-

ry,

ry, Majeſty, and Bounty, and that he is to be worſhipped, by adoring and fearing of him above all, ſomtime truth is put for the efficacy and power of truth. *Gal.* 2. 14. *Paul* reproveth *Peter*, and the reſt for not walking *according to the truth of the Goſpell*, becauſe the truth had not beene ſo efficatious with them, as to drive them from thoſe beggerly elements of the Ceremoniall Law, but they would have had the Gentiles for to have come up unto the Jewiſh practiſe.

Thirdly, What is ment by *holding the truth in unrighteouſneſſe*. To hold the truth of God in unrighteouſneſſe, is either by a kind of violence, and ſtrong hand, to ſuppreſſe it, and keep it back,

back, as if men would imprison it, least it should shine clearly abroad, when it is not onely, not submitted unto, followed and obeyed, but resisted, and gainsayed, and that which is point blank contrary to the direction of truth, is practised: or when it is fettered with some lust, that hinders the powerfull opperation, and efficatiousnesse of it upon the soul, so that the word cannot perform that worke, which otherwise it would, in the heart of them to whom it is sent.

Fourthly, What is ment by the word *unrighteousnesse*.

In some places of holy writ, it signifieth, onely such sins as are committed against the second Table, but in this place

place it ſignifieth, not onely the violation of the Law of Nature, in reſpect of our dutie to men, but our violation of the Law of God, in regard of that homage and ſervice wee owe unto His Majeſtie, ſo that it implyeth all ſinfull diſtempers, and corruptions of heart, all irregular belchings out of the affections: Out of the words thus opened we may obſerve theſe Propoſitions.

1. That much of God, of the power greatneſſe, and goodneſſe of God may bee known, and learned out of the book of the Creatures. *Obſerv.*

2. That all wicked men, are enemies to, and oppoſers of the truth of God. *Obſerv.*

3. The ground of this hinderance of, and oppoſition *Obſerv.*

against the word of God, is from that corruption that is in their hearts.

Observ. 4. That all such unrighteous ones, who oppose the word of truth, shall surely bear the wrath of God.

But I shall sum up as much as I shall treat of at this time, in this one proposition, viz.

Doct. That carnall and corrupt men, doe hinder the powerfull efficatiousnesse of the word of truth, from working upon their sinfull hearts, prevailing with them, and subduing of them, as much as in them lyeth, by reason of that inbred corruption that is in their hearts.

It is true that truhis powerfull, and will prevail, and if the Spirit of God set it home upon the Conscience, ther-

there is no heart so hard, but it will soften, no heart so proud but it will humble, & lay it lower then dust as low as the nethermost hell in its own apprehension, and when God sends his truth to subdue a corrupt heart, he doth not stand to aske the sinner whether he be willing or no, to submit to the word of truth, to put his shouldiers under the Government of Christ, for it is naturall to us since the fall of *Adam*, to run farther, and farther from God: *Cain* when he had slain his righteous brother, and was banished from God, it is said that hee dwelt in the Land of Nod, which signifieth wandring, for when he had once lost fellowship, and communion with God,

in whom alone ſoule ſatisfi-ing reſt is to be found, all the world was not ſufficiently to ſatisfie his immortall ſoule: as it was with him, ſo it is with us all by Nature, there-fore the Lord is faine, not onely to vouchſafe unto us meanes and helpes, and hea-venly directions, to do our ſouls good, but likewiſe to conquer our wills to ſubmit thereunto, even to force us, to receive dirrection, how our ſoules may be happy for ever.

But Gods Spirit doth not alwayes accompanie the Preaching of the word by its efficatious working, God many times ſtrives onely by his word, and by the com-mon workings of his Spirit, by inſtruction, by convicti-on,

on, by correction, but carnall hearts reſiſt, withſtand, and as much as in them lieth, labour to keep the word of God out of their hearts; for the better underſtanding of this, conſider theſe particulers. Firſt, There is ſome relickes of the Law of God, left in the conſciences of heathens, though they be ſtrangers to the life of Faith, and covenant of grace, 2 *Rom.* 14. 15. *For the Gentiles which have not the Law do by nature the things contained in the Law, they having not the Law are a Law unto themſelves, which ſhew the effect of the law written in their hearts, &c.* Hence many heathens have written large Volums of vice, and vertue, and have made many good Judiciall Lawes,

for the punishing of murder, adulterie, drunkennesse, and the like, with death it selfe, Conscience keep many carnall men from the act of sin, Conscience stand over them with a whip, so that they dare not doe many things, they have a minde unto, and a longing after.

Secondly, the workes of Creation doe discover much of the power, wisdome, and Soveraignitie of God.

But thirdly, the word of God is that which most cleerly discovers God in all his glorious attributes: Now though God discover himselfe, by that light which he hath set in every mans Conscience, by his workes of Creation, and providence, and likewise by the bright Ministery

Miniſtery of his word, never ſo cleerly, and unqueſtionably, yet carnall hearts will not yeeld thereunto, nor glorifie God in giving credit to the truth, neither be thankfull unto him for theſe glorious mercies, but endeavour, what in them lieth, to ſhut out, and keep out that light that darteth into their ſoules, to quench the motions of the ſpirit, and to eclips the light of the Goſpel, when it ſhineth cleerer then the Sun at noone day, as it was with the Jews, *Acts* 7. 51. When *Steven* brought the word neere to their hearts, and touched them to the quick, ſaith the text. 57. 58. verſes, *Then they gave a ſhout with a loud voice, and ſtopped their ears, and ran upon him violently all*

at once, and caſt him out of the City and ſtoned him: thus it was with the Sodomites, all the perſwaſions and entreaties of *Lot* could not prevaile with them, but they cry out *away hence, he came as a ſtranger, and ſhall hee judge and rule? Gen.19.9.* As they ſaid to *Lot* ſo doth every carnall heart to the word of God, when a Miniſter cometh unto them with an unfeined deſire, to do their ſoules good, to guide them in the way to bleſſedneſſe, to woe them, entreat them, and beſeech them, to bee reconciled to God, and no longer to reſiſt his truth, blaſpheme his Name, pollute his holy things, to break off their ſinfull courſes, & to become as zealous for the wayes of God,

God, and ſervants of God, as heretofore they have been for ſin, and Satan, in ſtead of yeelding to theſe bleſſed motions, they cry *ſtand back, who made you judge*, wee regard not your councell, we feare not your threatenings, and ſay in their hearts as they did, *Iere.* 18. 12. *We will walk after our owne immaginations, and do every man after the ſtoubberneſſe of his own wicked heart*, thus they even take up armes againſt the Miniſters of God, and the truthes of God, when they come to pull them out of their carnall courſes.

For the better diſcoverie of the point, I will cleare it in theſe three particulars.

1. What is the Power of truth. 2. How wicked men

hinder it. 3. The reaſon why they doe ſo hinder it.

Queſt. 1. Firſt, What is the power of truth, or what would it worke upon the ſoule, that wicked men oppoſe it?

Anſw. The worke and power of it will appeare in foure particulars.

1. Firſt, it is a word of information, diſcovering things in their native, and proper collours, pulling off that vizzard that carnall reaſon hath put upon them, *Prov.6. 23. For the Commandement is a Lanthorn, an inſtruction, a light*; A Light is uſefull in a darke and narrow way; ſo is the word of God to direct us, and informe us, how to walke in the narrow path that leadeth unto life, by this a man is informed, what is

to

to be ſhunned, what to be followed, what is to be loved, what to be hated, A man cannot miſcarrie nor looſe his way, ſo long as he is directed by the Light of the truth: as the Sun ſheweth all the moates that be in the houſe, ſo this diſcovers all the corrupt corners that be in the ſoule, all that envie, pride, hypocriſie, blaſphemy, that lodgeth in the heart: *Epheſ.* 5. 13. *But all things when they are reproved of the light, are manifeſt, for it is light that maketh all things manifeſt*; A man may there be reſolved in everie doubtfull caſe of conſcience, the ballance of the Sanctuarie is that wherein we ſhould weigh our thoughts, words, and workes.

Secondly,

2. Secondly, as it is a word of information, ſo it is a word of quickening, a vigorous powerfull word, which not onely ſheweth the way, and pointeth to the right path, but enableth a man to walke in that path in the ſtrength thereof, ſo that he walketh on cheerefully in Heaven way, notwithſtanding all the rubs, and oppoſitions that he meeteth withall in the world; It is not onely as the Sun to ſhew us the right way, but as a ſtrong ſtreame to carrie us on in that way, *David, Pſal.* 119.50. ſpeaking of the word of God, ſaith, *It is my comfort in my trouble, for thy promiſe hath quickened mee.*

3. Thirdly, The word hath a drawing power in it, ſaith the

the Church, *Cant.* 1.3. *Draw mee and I will run after thee.* The Church confeſſeth that ſhee cannot come to Chriſt, except ſhee be drawne, now the word of God hath ſuch a drawing power in it, though corruption be ſtrong, and the Outward man heavy, yet it will lead a man on in the right way that he ſhould walke.

4. Fourthly, it is a word of conviction, it is powerfull to overthrow all the gainſayings of man, it hath a ſoveraigne, ſupreame Authority in it, to beare downe all carnall reaſonings, when the Lord is pleaſed to accompanie it. 2. *Cor.* 10. 4. *The weapons of our warefare, are not carnall,* feeble and weake, *but mighty thorough God to the pulling downe of ſtrong holds.* There is a mighty

mighty operation in the truth, hence ſaith the Apoſtle, 2. *Cor.* 13. 8. *We cannot doe anie thing againſt the truth, but for the truth.* So that truth is powerfull, and though corruption be ſtrong, the world inticing, and the Divell enſnaring, yet if the Lord be pleaſed to ſet the truth home upon the ſoule, either to informe it, or to quicken it, or to draw it on in Heaven waies, or to convince it, all theſe avocations, and pull backs, ſhall not hinder it; thus we ſee the truth wil work.

Quæſt. Secondly, How doth a carnall man hinder the powerfull working of this word, that it may not prevaile with his ſoule, the word would have the Soule, but the Soule will have its ſinnes: And its oppoſition againſt the truth doth

appeare in theſe foure particulars.

Anſw. 1. Firſt, a carnall heart is marvellous unwilling, and altogether indiſpoſed to liſten to the Truth of God, ſo as to be inſtructed therein, and examine himſelfe thereby, it is teadious to fleſh and blood to waite ſpon the truth, it is not willing to know its duty, to know what the word ſaith in ſuch, and ſuch caſes, leaſt it ſhould pull ſome of his ſweete morſells from betwixt his teeth, cut off his right hand, pull out his right eye, ſome boſome ſinnes that are as neere and deare unto him as either of them, therefore he is willing to be a ſtranger to the Truth of God, and though Manna from Heaven lyeth at his doore, yet he will not ſtep out

out to gather it in, men naturally ſtop their eares againſt the truth *Eſay* 30. 10. *They ſay to the Seers ſee not, and to the Prophets propheſie not right things, ſpeake to us ſmooth things, propheſie deceits; Get thee out of the way, turne aſide out of the path, cauſe the holy one of Iſrael to ceaſe from before us:* So *Job.* 21. 14. *They ſay alſo unto God depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of thy wayes;* They deſire nothing more then to be exempt from all ſubjection unto God, that in *Acts.* 28.27. is likewiſe here conſiderable, *For the heart of this people is waxed fat, and their eares are dull of hearing, and with their eyes have they winked, leaſt they ſhould ſee with their eyes, and heare with their eares, and underſtand with their*

their hearts, and ſhould returne that I might heale them. Winked with their eyes, that is, they made as though they ſaw not, that which they did ſee, againſt their wills, carnall men are loath to know the truth, if they doe ſearch for it, it is onely as a Coward doth for his Enemy, with a hope not to finde him, yea with a feare leſt he ſhould find him; So a naturall man is fearefull to ſearch, and loath to find the truth, but if the truth doe glanſe in, and conſcience begin to recoile, then, he ſeekes out for ſome merry company, that may help him to ſmother theſe motions of the Spirit, as *Saul* ſent for *David* to play before him, when the evill Spirit came upon him. We uſe to draw a Curtaine before the Sun

Sun when it shineth too bright in our eyes, so saith every carnall heart when the word shineth in his soule, Oh, draw a Curtaine before it, let me heare no more of this, least it drive me out of wits, I would have Christ, but I would have the world also, if God would but allow me such a sinne, meaning his bosome corrruption, I would willingly come up unto him, in every thing else that he should require at my hands, thus conscience puts them to doe somthing, and the word hath some slightly worke upon them, like the seede that fell in the stonie ground, but yet they will not part with their Dalilah Corruptions, but when it toucheth the covetous mans gaine, the voluptuous mans

pleasure

pleaſure, then they crie out, draw a Curtaine before it.

Secondly, A carnall heart is alwayes ready to raiſe an evill report of the bleſſed truth of God, that ſo it may appear deformed to the eyes of them that begin to expreſſe ſome deſire after it, they deal with it as the ſpies did with the Land of Canaan, *Num.* 13. 32. *So they brought up an evill report of the Land which they had ſearched, unto the Children of Iſrael, ſaying the Land which we have gone to ſearch is a Land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof, &c.* The Gyants were ſo cruell that they eat up one another, and thoſe that came amongſt them; upon this report the Children of *Iſrael* murmoured againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron*, and they wiſhed themſelves

ſelves in *Egypt* again, *Exo.* 14. 2. They would willingly have been in Canaan, they ſtill cryed out for the Land that flowed with milk and hony, but they were not willing to encounter with any hardſhip by the way, when once they heard of Gyants, then the Leekes and Garlick of *Egypt*, was preferred before the delicacies of the Land of Canaan, when Chriſt feed his followers, many flocked after him, but it was more for love to the loaves, then to his Doctrine, *John* 6.26. Many would bee happy that are not willing to be holy, when once they are called upon to deny themſelves, to crucifie their beloved ſinnes, to forſake all, yea life it ſelf for the truth, then they cry out it is a heard

ſaying

ſaying and who can bear it, and then they ſcandalize the wayes of God, and the truth of God, and raiſe evill reports of them.

Is it then in our power to make the word effectuall? *Object.*

No, but it is your power to doe more then you doe, your legs may as well carry you to the word, as to an Ale-houſe, your ears may heare the word as well as idle tales, you may ſing as well Pſalmes as idle ſongs, you may read good books, as well as Play-books, doe you what you are able to doe, put all your ſtrength, and diligence unto it, and then caſt your ſelves upon God, and tell his Majeſty, that faine you would forſake every evill way, but of your ſelfe you are not able, and though the *Anſw.*

ſpirit

ſpirit bee ſomewhat willing yet the fleſh is weak, and that you have a baſe deceitfull heart that is ready to embrace every occaſion of ſinning, that lyeth in the way, beſeech him therefore not onely to begin, but to conſummate every good work within you; Though it be not in mens power to ſave themſelves, yet their owne Conſciences will tell them, that they might do more then they do. *Luke* 7. 29. 30. *The Publicans juſtified* God, (that is ſaid that hee was faithfull and mercifull) *Being Baptized with the baptiſme of John, but the Phariſees, and Lawyers rejected the councell of God, againſt themſelves*, (or to their own hurt) *and were not Baptized of John*; terms of grace and Salvation, were offered both

both to Publicanes, and Phariſees, the one reiect the good councell of God given, the other accept of it; therefore when we ſee others called, converted by the ſame meanes we live under, wee ſhould blame our ſelves, and reflect upon our ſouls, and ſay, the word would have enlightened me, ha! I not contemned it, it would have quickened mee had I not gainſayed it, I was almoſt converted, I had ſome taſtes of Heaven and happineſſe, but, oh, wretch that I was, company came, thoughts of the world came and choaked it: the Lord hath oftentimes knocked at my heart but I would not ſet open the doores of my ſoul that the King of glory might come in.

Thirdly, A Carnall heart doth

doth oppoſe the good word of God, ſo that it works not upon his ſoul, by reſiſting the work of conviction, when the word of God hath had ſome powerfull work upon the ſoul, that the ſinner is awakened, and his conſcience rouſed up within him, that hee cannot but ſay, I am the man, theſe are my ſinnes, which (unleſſe the Lord in mercy prevent it) will ſurely be my ruine now carnall reaſon endeavours either to extenuate the ſins, or to villifie the word of God, and the truth of it, which is the ground of all oppoſition againſt the word, for if men did indeed beleeve that it was the word of an Almighty God, and that every curſe therein denounced, ſhould ſurely fall upon the heads of thoſe

those that transgresse those Ordinances divine, they durst not sinne against the plaine commands thereof as they doe. When *Balack* sent to *Baalam* to curse the people of God (thinking him to be a Witch, and therefore whom hee blessed was blessed, and whom he cursed were cursed) God saith to *Baalam*, *thou shalt not goe with them*, therefore hee went not; But when *Balack* sent more honorable men then they, and promiseth him promotion; then saith the poore sinfull covetous wretch, *Stay all night, and I will see what the Lord will say*, when as the Lord had peremtorily said thou shalt not goe with them, yet his affections were lingering after the house-full of gold, therefore he hoped that

God would have changed his minde, and thus hee tempted God, to require him contrary to his commandement, a low esteeme that hee had of the word of God was the cause of that fearfull sin. Now how many be there that follow *the wayes of Baalam* as the Apostle *Jude* speaketh, who are willing to obey the commands of God so long as it may stand with their profit, and honour, but when such a tryall comes, as that by lying and deceit, they may get gain, as hear a house full of gold proffered, then they look for a dispensation, then they cast the Commandments behinde their backes: Many a Vsurer, that findes the sweetnesse of it, and is resolved to continue in that sin, hee will studie all the Arguments

ments that hee can to palliate it, and readily catch hold of every thing that may seeme in the least manner to countenance it, but oh, how hardly can he be brought to give eare to what the word of God saith against it. When *Moses* stood before *Pharaoh*, and his rod, by the immediate finger of God was turned into a Serpent, *Pharaoh* doth not sit kowne under the Miracle, but to make it of light esteem, he sends for his Magicians, who turne likewise their rods into Serpents, but *Moses* his rod devoured theirs, Yet saith the text *Pharaohs heart was hardned*, so it is with every carnall heart, when the word cometh home, and convinceth him, and fills his soul with terrour, and trouble, then he send his

Magicians, carnall reasonings, and though the word of God doth eat up all those reasonings, yet the carnall heart goeth away satisfied, and with *Pharaoh* groweth harder and harder.

Fourthly, and lastly, if by carnall reason they cannot defeat the truth, then they fall to down right opposition of it, laying violent hands upon it, and in despite of the truth doe whatsoever their own wicked hearts suggest, as it was with the Children of Israel, when their proud hearts prompted them to aske a King, *Samuel* makes a gracious Sermon unto them to dissuade them from it, and hee shewes them the manner of their King, and how he should enslave them, and make their sonnes and

their daughters & all that they had to be at his diſpoſing; not that Kings have any ſuch Authority by their office, but being he was to reigne in Gods wrath, therefore hee ſhould uſurpe this power on his brethren) but the people would not hear the voyce of *Samuel*, but did ſay, *Nay, but there ſhall be a King over us*: So it is with every carnall heart, when the word cometh ſo cloſe home to his Conſcience, that he cannot evade it, yet out of a deſperate madneſſe, he ſaith, I will not obey it, but let all ſuch know, that though the command of God prevail not with them, to convert them here, yet it ſhall one day prevail over them, to damne them for ever, *Mat.* 25. 46. *Theſe ſhall go into everlaſting paine*. The reaſons of the point follow. G 3 Firſt,

Firſt, Carnall men do thus oppoſe the truth, as hath been ſhewed, becauſe they are unwilling for to have their ſins diſcovered, and removed, there ſinnes are as deare unto them as their lives, as the life of their precious ſouls (which are more worth then all the world) and will not a man ſtrive for his life? Now when the word of God comes to pluck the cup from the drunkard, the whore from the Adulterer, pleaſure from the voluptuous man, they part with them as they would part with their lives, they will rather ſuffer their ſinnes to kill their immortall ſouls, then the word to kill their ſins.

Secondly, Becauſe a carnall minded man, cannot take pleaſure in any thing if he be debarred

barred of his liberty of ſinning, he accounts it a plague & vexation to live under a ſtirring Miniſtery, or in a Godly family, where he dares not wallow in ſinne as he would, Oh, how tedious is it; Hence how will he rejoyce, when the Godly, (who are the Pillars of the Land) are removed, *Revel.* 11. 10. When the two witneſſes are killed, *Then they that dwell upon the earth, ſhall rejoyce over them, and be glad, and ſhall ſend gifts one to another: becauſe theſe two Prophets vexed them that dwelt on the earth*; The Goſpell of Chriſt is not onely a ſtumbling block but an affliction to the world, and the Miniſtery thereof, *is the ſavour of death unto death to thoſe that periſh.* 2. *Cor.* 2. 16.

Thirdly, carnall men doe thus oppose the truth, because it will not allow them any sin, any of their sweete morsells. they would be willing to part with those sinnes that they are not much inclined unto; the young man in the Gospell went far, and *Herod* reformed many things, and *Agrippa* was almost perswaded to be a Christian, but when it came to their bosome corruption there they stick, *Demetrious* and his fellow-craftsmen *raise sedition against Paul*, when he once began to confute the opinion which men had of *Dianas* Image, *by which craft they got their gaine*; for gaine cloaked with a shew of Religion, is the very cause whereof Idolatry is stoutly, and stubbornly defended.

For

For examination, Is it ſo that corrupt hearts doe hinder the word from working effectually upon them, then let us examine our ſelves, whether the Commandments of the Lord are not greiveous unto us, whether we could not wiſh that many of them, that forbid ſuch, and ſuch, of our beloved ſinnes, were not rayſed out of the Booke of God, whether we doe not thinke God a hard Maſter, and that he layeth too ſtrick a charge, and tye upon us. If it be thus with us, it is an undoubted argument that our hearts are carnall, *deceitfull above all, and deſperately wicked*, as *Jeremiah ſpeakes*. There is indeed in the beſt of Gods Children ſome ſecret reſiſting againſt the truth, becauſe there will

Uſe 1.

will be fleſh, as well as ſpirit in them, ſo long as they are on this ſide the grave, but when it ſtirres, they lie not downe under it, but fall out with their owne hearts, and take up Armes againſt thoſe enemies of their peace and happineſſe, it is one thing to have ſinne remaining, another thing to have ſinne ruling.

Now this truth meeteth eſpecially with two ſorts of falſe-hearted men.

1. Diſcreete hypocrites.
2. Subtile hypocrites

1. Diſcreete hypocrites: Diſcretion indeed ſimply conſidered in it ſelfe, is a bleſſed worke of Gods Spirit, wrought in the hearts of his people, and is alwayes acting upon good grounds, in a good matter, and to a right end; But there is

is a worldly diſcretion that lodgeth in hypocriticall hearts which turnes to the deſtruction of many a ſoule, therefore I call ſuch a one a diſcreete hipocrite, one that will alwayes indeavour to be on the ſtrongeſt ſide, one that will joyne with the moſt, though it be with the worſt, one that according to the Proverb, *Will hunt with the Hound, and run with the Hare*, one that regards not whether the Cauſe of Chriſt ſinke or ſwime, ſo he may ſave himſelfe, one that thinks them all madde men that will ſuffer for Religion, or for conſcience ſake, that want his diſcretion, and will not turne with the winde, as he doth, he is one that can be zealous for the Glory of God, ſo long as it runnes a long with his

own

owne advantage, as *Jehu*; falſe hearted *Jehu* was very zealous in executing the Lords Command, in cutting off the houſe of *Ahab* roote and branch, that ſo he might ſettle himſelfe the faſter in the Kingdome: But when it cometh to the touch that he muſt either forſake Chriſt, or the world, then *Demas* like, he follows this preſent world, his religion ebbs, and flows with the Current of the times he lives in, with the wicked he can ſhew himſelfe wicked, with the righteous he can ſhew himſelfe righteous, he hath his religion as it were in a ſcrue, he can ſet it higher and lower, according as the times goe, he can ſerve God upon any termes, after any faſhion, he indeavours to pleaſe all,

that

that ſo he may get himſelfe a name amongſt men, when as the Lord will *ſpue him out of his mouth becauſe he is neither hot nor cold*, *Rev.* 3. 16. This is a diſcreete hypocrite.

Secondly, the ſubtile hypocrite, one that pretends nothing but love, and likeing to religion, as if he made it the aime, and end of his courſe, one that would not be knowne to thinke, much leſſe to ſpeake any thing againſt the truth, when in the meane while his owne heart knowes, that he is a ſecret Vndermainer of it, he pretends he ſeekes after the Liberty of the Goſpell, when he ſeekes his owne carnall liberty, like *Saul*, who pretended that he kept alive the cheife of the Cattle, for ſacrifice, when it was meerely out of a cove-

tous

tous humour that he did it: Further he is one that will pretend marvellous humility, he will ſeeme to be content to doe any thing, to ſuffer any thing for the truth, and all this out of a vaine oſtentation, he ſeekes himſelfe in all, and though he can denie himſelfe in ſome lawfull comforts, yet it is onely out of a ſelfe end that he doeth it, and therefore it is not acceptable with the Lord, ſaith *David*, *Pſal.* 119. 6. *I ſhall not be aſhamed nor confounded when I have reſpect to all thy Commandements*, Now this hypocrite hath not reſpect to all Gods Commandements therefore he ſhall ſurely be confounded.

Uſe 2. Is for Conſolation to all thoſe who finde that their hearts be levell to the rule of the

the word, who are willing to let goe all beloved ſinnes, (though never ſo pleaſant and profitable) and worldly ends whatſoever, yea to give up their all, yea their life it ſelfe when God ſhall call for it, this may be a ground of unſpeakable comfort unto them, for they finde that diſtinguiſhing Caracter in their ſoules, which cannot be found in the hearts of any hypocrites in the world: Conſider therefore with thy ſelfe, how thou canſt ſtoope as well to the Commands, as to the Promiſes of the word, canſt ſubmit to every bleſſed truth, art willing both to know it, and to practiſe it, and to delight thy ſelfe in it day and night: Is there any ſoule here, whoſe Conſcience beares him witneſſe, that it is thus

thus with him, that he is willing not onely to heare, but likewiſe to entertaine every Truth of God, even thoſe that are moſt contrary to fleſh and bloud, and that he can ſay in the uprightneſſe of his ſpirit as before the Lord, be there any more Truths of the Lord to be diſcovered, Oh! that I might heare them, and come to underſtand them, how willingly would I come up unto them, and put them in practice; that can ſay with the holy man *Job*, *Surely it is meete to be ſayd unto God I have borne chaſtiſement, and I will not offend any more, that which I ſee not, teach thou mee, and if I have done Iniquitie I will doe ſo no more.* Such a man as can thus love, and thus entertaine the truth; he is a Free-man of

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Heaven, one of the bleſſed Company of Saints and Angells, *Iohn* 8. 32. *And yee ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free.* This was the joy of the Apoſtle, 3. *Epiſt. Iohn* 4. *I have no greater joy then to heare that my Children walke in the truth.* If it was ſo great a matter of joy to him that he had beene an Inſtrument to worke this bleſſed worke upon other mens ſoules, how much greater cauſe of joy haſt thou, that it is wrought upon thy ſoule; God himſelfe loveth the truth, *and requireth truth in the inward parts*, He delighteth alſo to reward the lovers of it: Doſt thou love the Truth of Chriſt? then it will give the ſame teſtimonie of thee, as it did to *Demetrius*. 3. *Epiſt.* of *Iohn*

Joh. 12. Demetrius hath a good report of the truth it self, And if the Truth report well of thee, fear not what the world, what thy freinds, or enemies say of thee, for the testimony of the truth will be a comfort unto thee when all false witnesses shall stand aside, and thou shalt be able to lift up thine head, when those that have derided the truth, and thee for the truths sake, shall hang downe their heads, and have their hearts to faile within them. Then this shall be a comfort to a poore soule, when his conscience shall beare him witnesse, that although he hath had many weaknesses, yet there was never any truth made known unto his soule, but he was willing to entertaine it, never any

sinne

ſinne was diſcovered to his ſoule, to be a ſinne, but inſtantly he loathed it, then the Truth ſhall ſtand up and ſay I beare witneſſe Lord, that he loved mee, entertained mee, and delighted in mee, though he indured bitter perſecutions for my ſake, and ſo the truth ſhall make him free, the devill ſhall not have any thing to lay to his charge, and God the Father, God the Sonne, and God the bleſſed Spirit ſhall be ready to imbrace ſuch a Soule, for God is a God of Truth, Chriſt is the Word of Truth, and the Holy Ghoſt is the Spirit of Truth; Therefore labour after the Truth, let not your hearts any longer oppoſe its efficatious working upon your ſoules, but unceſſantly intreat the God of Truth, to

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ſet every truth that you ſhall heare home upon your hearts.

FINIS.

THE PLANTATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

Set forth in a *Sermon* on *Pſalme* 1. 3.

By

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THE PLANTATION OF The RIGHTEOVS.

PSAL. 1. 3.

But he ſhall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in due ſeaſon, his leafe alſo ſhall not wither, and whatſoever he doth ſhall proſper.

IN the begining of this Pſalme the Prophet *David* giveth ſomewhat a generall, and confuſed veiw of

of bleſſednesse, which is the desire of all our hearts, the end of all our hopes, and travails; and then he first, poynteth out the by-paths in which those that walke, shall be sure never to attain unto this bleſſednesse, 2. He setteth out the true and ready way to happinesse, and the severall stations therein, which are but two, *delighting, and meditating in the word of God*, 3. In the words of the text he doth more particularly, and distinkely discover this happinesse, that so he might win upon mens affections, and make their soules be enamored therwith. 4. He sheweth the woefull estate, and condition of those that doe not walke in this way, that leadeth to happinesse, *they are not so*, but the winde

winde of Gods Wrath ſhall drive them away like chaffe. Laſtly, he giveth the reaſons of it, *for the Lord knoweth*, that is, doth approve and proſper *the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked ſhall periſh.*

Now in the third verſe, here is firſt a familiar Similitude of a Tree, and this tree is further diſcovered, 1. By the nature of it, it is a planted tree, not a wild tree. 2. By the place where it groweth, and *that is, by the rivers of waters.* 3. By the property of it, *it bringeth forth his fruite in due ſeaſon.* 4. By ſome effects. 1. A perpetuall flouriſhing, *his leafe ſhall not fade.* 2. A good iſſue to every undertaking, *whatſoever he doth ſhall proſper.* As it is with a Tree digged out of a barren land, and tranſplanted

into a fruitfull Soyle, and ſet by a river of water, it bringeth forth much fruite, and remaineth in a flouriſhing eſtate; So it is with thoſe who having bin rooted out of the drie wilderneſſe of ſin, and are by the great Husbandman God the Father, tranſported into the true Vine Jeſus Chriſt, and ſet by the Rivers of his word and Ordinances, they grow fruitfull in grace and goodneſſe, bringing forth flouriſhing fruite, and that in due ſeaſon, when it may make moſt for the Glorie of God, and the good of his people, and their fruit ſhall neither fade, nor periſh, untill they attaine unto perfection, and a full fruition of Happineſſe with Chriſt in Glorie.

So that this third verſe doth

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in particular diſcover the difference betwixt a godly, and godleſſe man: They are contrary in their principalls, and wayes, They are contrary in their fruites, and they ſhall be contrary in their accounts at the laſt Day.

Now for the preſent I ſhall wave all the other Characters of a godly man, and treat only upon this: *viz.* That as he bringeth forth fruite, ſo it is fruite in due ſeaſon: So the Point hence conſiderable is this: *viz. It is the duty of a godly man, not onely to performe thoſe duties, diſcharge thoſe ſervices that God requireth of him, but to doe them in the fitteſt ſeaſon*; Or take it thus in breife, *The duties of Saints ought to be ſeaſonable.* Doct.

The point may ſeeme ſtrange

to ſome, it is little known and leſſe practiſed amongſt moſt. I ſhall therefore 1. Prove the point. 2. Shew the grounds and reaſons of it. 3. Apply it.

First, for the proofe of it, the Lord commands it, *Numb.* 9. 2, 3. *The Children of Iſrael ſhall celebrate the Paſſover at the time appointed thereunto: In the foureteenth day of this month at Even ye ſhall keepe it in his due ſeaſon, according to all the Ordinances of it, and according to all the Cerimonies of it ſhall ye keepe it.* That is, in all points as the Lord hath inſtituted it, if they did not obſerve the right time and ſeaſon the Lord would not accept it. And as the Lord commandeth it, ſo he practiſeth it, *Pſal.* 145. 15. *The eyes of all waite upon thee, and thou giveſt their meat in due ſeaſon.*

So Exod. 12. 1. Levit. 23. 5 28. 16. Deut. 16. 2

ſon. And the Prophet *Eſay* ſheweth that for this end the Lord ſent him to his people Iſraell, *Eſay* 50. 4. *The Lord God hath given mee the tongue of the Learned, that I ſhould know how to miniſter a word in due ſeaſon to him that is weary.* And Chriſt ſheweth in the parable of the Vineyard, *Mat.* 21. 41. That God will let out his Vineyard to ſuch husbandmen as will deliver him *the fruites in their ſeaſons.* And he ſhall be Steward of Gods Houſhold *who will give unto his fellow-ſervants their meate in ſeaſon*, *Luke* 12. 42. And it is ſaid, *Eccleſiaſt.* 10. 16, 17. *Woe to thee O Land, when thy King is a Child* (that is without wiſedome and councell) *and thy Princes eate in the morning*: that is, out of ſeaſon, more for

luſt, then for neceſſity: *But bleſſed art thou O Land, when thy King is the Sonne of Nobles,* (that is noble for vertue, and wiſedome,) *and thy Princes eate in due time, for ſtrength, and not for drunkenneſſe.* And *Prov.* 15. 23. *How good is a word in due ſeaſon*; for there is a ſeaſon for words, as well as for actions, and everie good thing is proper onely in its place, and a thing in it ſelfe prayſe worthy, loſeth its commendation unleſſe it be ſet in its proper ſeate: So we ſee that the point is plaine, that the Saints of God ought to obſerve the fitteſt ſeaſons and opportunities for their performance of duties and that is a thing both commanded, and commended.

Queſt. But now the Queſtion will be, How ſhall a man be able to dif-

diſcerne the due ſeaſon for his ſervices, the fit time for thoſe duties that are to be diſcharged by him?

Anſ. Firſt, in the generall, when all circumſtances and occaſions doe concurre for a duty, that is the ſeaſon, and the time for that duty: As for inſtance, the day time is a ſeaſon for a man to walke in, there is time enough for it in the night, but that is not a ſeaſon, and when the winde and tide ſerveth, then the Sea-fairing man is to lance forth, or elſe though he may have time enough afterwards, yet he may waite long enough for a ſeaſon; So when the Goſpell is cleerely preached, and the deep myſteries thereof diſcovered, and the hazard that ſuch men run as neglect theſe opportunities

fully layd open, then it is a fit ſeaſon for a man to bethink himſelfe of repenting and returning; For in hell a man ſhall have time enough to repent, but there he ſhall want a ſeaſon, an opportunity: therefore a Chriſtian ſhould be wiſe to obſerve his ſeaſon, and when occaſions, opportunities and abilities: Sute, to take that time for the performance of his duties.

1. In particular: 1. We muſt be ſure to let each time have his allowance that concernes that day, and that time; ſaith Chriſt, *Mat.* 6. 34. *Take no thought for to morrow, for ſufficient to the day is the evill thereof.* Every day bringeth evill enough with it, there are ſinnes, failings, and imperfections enough this day, there-

therefore no neede to take care for a ſecond or third day, it is ſeaſonable therefore to ſet our thoughts upon our preſent condition, for as ſufficient to the day is the evill thereof, ſo ſufficient to the day are the duties thereof, that dayly taske that God hath ſet us, may be ſufficient to take up our whole thoughts; we are every day to beg our dayly bread, to ſue out the pardon of our ſinnes, to make our peace with God, we know not whether we ſhall live till the morrow, therefore we ought dayly to diſcharge thoſe dutyes that are ſuited to the preſent day.

Secondly, that time is moſt ſeaſonable for the diſcharge of our duties, when we finde our bodies, and Spirits beſt diſpoſed for ſuch ſervices: we

ſhould ſtrike while the iron is hot, faſhion the veſſell while the clay is ſoft, ſo we ſhould ſet upon dutyes when we are in full ſtrength, and activity of ſpirit: It is not ſeaſonable for a man to goe to pray when almoſt aſleepe, or when in bed, but when his ſpirit is awake, active and ſtirring. For a man to put off his repentance and making his peace with God, till he is old, and weake both in body and ſpirit, and then thinke of ſerving of the Lord, when he can ſerve the devill no longer, this is not ſeaſonable, what man would accept of ſuch ſervice? This is juſt as if a young man that is in his prime ſtrength, ſhould ſay here is ſuch a burden that I muſt carry upon paine of death before I dye, I will let it

it alone untill I am old and weake, and then I will carry it; Doth not this man loſe his ſeaſon? As Water-men take the advantage of the tide, ſo ſhould we learn to take the advantage of our natures. The Holy Ghoſt giveth this charge *Honour the Lord with the firſt fruits of thine increaſe*, and to ſuch he annexeth this promiſe, *So ſhall thy barnes be filled with plenty*. And in the old Law the Lord required the firſt that opened the wombe; that alſo is here conſiderable, *Malac.* 1. 13. 14. The Prieſts and the people were weary of ſerving the Lord, and regarded not what ſacrifices they offered up unto him, therefore ſaith the Lord, *Curſed be the deceiver, that hath in his flock a male*, (that is ability to ſerve the

Pro. 9. 10.

the Lord according to his word *and ſacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing*, that is, ſerveth the Lord according to his covetous minde.

Thirdly, that our duties may be ſeaſonable, we ſhould ſo diſcharge them, that one may be helpfull and not hindering unto others, and we ſhould learne ſo to forecaſt the buſineſſes of our outward calling, that we might loſe no opportunities for our ſoules advantage; Further we muſt ſo diſcharge our duties, that any particular may not croſſe the generall, as we muſt not take up ſo much time in our owne buſineſſes, as to deprive ourſelves of time, and ſtrength, for the duryes of Gods worſhip; So, neither muſt we ſo ſpend our ſtrength in one duty, as there-

by to make us unfit for others, for though we have time for duties, yet if we want ſtrength, and ſpirit, it cannot be ſeaſonable.

Now for Duties occaſionall, therein we muſt obſerve two rules.

Firſt, if it be ſuch an occaſionall duty, as may be omitted without prejudice to any, and if diſcharged an opportunity for the doing of another good would be neglected, then a man may paſſe it by: But if a dutie commeth in a mans way that requireth preſent diſcharge, and if neglected, cannot be recalled nor recovered, when as the duty of his common courſe may be regained againe, if it be for the preſent paſſed by, now this is a ſeaſon for an occaſionall

nall duty; as for inſtance, it is a mans dutie daily to pray in his familie, now if a neceſſary occaſionall dutie be caſt in, which cannot be diſcharged afterwards, a man muſt omit prayer for the preſent, and diſcharge that other duty: In many caſes God will have mercie, and not ſacrifice, if our Neighbours houſe be on fire, and we have our dutie to performe, we muſt for the preſent paſſe by our duty, and helpe our neighbour, and our Saviour ſheweth that it is *lawfull for a man to pull his Oxe, or his Aſſe out of the pit upon the Sabboth day*, in ſuch caſes God will have mercie, and not ſacrifice.

Mat. 12. 11.

Que. 2. If one duty muſt be loſt, and if we cannot regaine both of them, which then muſt be taken

taken up, and performed?

Anſ. Looke which duty is moſt excellent and neceſſary, take up that and let the other paſſe, and herein know that duties of the firſt table, are to be diſcharged before duties of the ſecond, we muſt ſerve God before men, that duty which is higheſt in place, and worth, muſt firſt be diſcharged, this is ſeaſonable.

Qu. 3. How can a man know the preheminence of any duty?

Anſ. That which concerns Gods Glory is to be preferred before that which concernes a mans ſelfe, that which is for my good muſt give place to that which is for Gods Glory, for we muſt have an eye more to Gods glory, then to the Salvation of our ſouls, in all the duties that we performe.

Secondly

Secondly, for thoſe duties that concerne our neighbour, though I muſt doe nothing to others, that I would not have done to my ſelfe, yet I muſt learne to doe good to my ſelfe in the firſt place, if the duties that are to be diſcharged in reference to others be of the ſame ranke and quality, with thoſe that concerne my ſelfe, then I muſt preferre my own occaſions before another mans, my goods before his, my body before his, my life before his, ſerve my ſelfe in the firſt place, and my neighbour in the ſecond, but I muſt not preferre my body before his ſoule, my temporalls before his ſpirituall, nor my goods before his life: If we take ſuch like directions as theſe, then our duties will be

ſafe

ſeaſonable, and ſo acceptable with the Lord.

Firſt, if the ſeaſon of doing duties be thus obſerved, it beautifyeth all our actions, *Prov.* 25. 11. *A word ſpoken in ſeaſon is like apples of Gold in pictures of Silver.* If a man ſtrike while the mettell is hot, glorious formes may be effected; So in the worke of grace, if a man take the opportunity while the wind is blowing, the word preaching, the Spirit lifting, and ſtirring in the Soule, then a glorious worke, a new creation may be wrought, but if men delay untill their eyes be dime, their limbes feeble, their ſtrength ſpent, their ſpirits weake, and corruption ſtrong and faſt rooted in the Soule, this ſeldome proves a ſeaſon for the doing *Reaſ.* 1.

doing of ſuch a Soule good, for if conſcience now cometh to be awakened, and the ſinfull Soule to ſee, what opportunities God hath vouchſafed it, what profers he hath made, what ſeaſons for the doing, and receiving of good have beene afforded: all which he hath abuſed and trifled away, and the Soule now fearing that it ſhall never have ſuch ſeaſons more, but that the day of grace ſhall ſet upon it, hereupon it is driven to deſpaire.

Reaſ. 2. Becauſe things are ſweeteſt, & find beſt acceptance when they come in their ſeaſon; Oh, how ſweete is bread to the hungry, and water to the thirſtie, becauſe then they are ſeaſonable; when a full ſtomacke loathes the honie-combe; that ſeede thrives beſt that is ſowen

in

in its seaſon, and that worke goeth on the beſt that is undertaken in a fitting time, therfore the Preacher, *Eccle.* 12. 1. calls upon men *to remember their Creatour in the dayes of their youth, whilſt the evill dayes come not, nor the yeers approach wherein thou ſhalt ſay I have no pleaſure*; For old dayes are likely to be evill daies, unleſſe we make our peace with God in our young daies for that is the ſeaſon that God lookes for, and calls for, that men ſhould remember him in, and God ſeldome giveth the grace of repentance to men in their declining yeares, who have deſpiſed it in the daies of their youth. A thing out of ſeaſon is like phyſick brought to a dead man, which if it had bin ſeaſonably applied, might have

have done him good: Be wise to take every opportunity to doe good to others, and to receive good for your owne soules, least ye repent with a sad heart, when it is too late, when ye have lost the season of grace and mercie; consider what the Lord saith, *Prov.* 1. 28, 29. *They shall call upon mee but I will not answer, they shall seeke mee early, but they shall not finde mee, because they hated knowledge, and did not chuse the feare of the Lord, they would none of my councell, but despised my correction, therefore shall they eate of the fruite of their owne doings, and be filled with their owne devises.*

Use 1. Is it so that the Saints of God ought to doe their duties in season, then let this be for triall to every one of our soules,

ſoules, and let us examine our ſelves whether we have ſeaſonably diſcharged thoſe duties that the Lord requireth of us both in our generall, and particular Callings, and be humbled if we finde our ſelves blame worthy. If we doe conſider our waies, and looke backe upon our former carriages, and veiw over the whole courſe of our lives, I doubt that the beſt of us ſhall finde, that many opportunities, many bleſſed ſeaſons, for the hoarding up of comfortable proviſion againſt the evill day have bin neglected, how often hath this gratious Proclimation from heaven ſounded in the eares of us notorious Rebells, that whatever our ſins have bin, for the nature, for the number of them, yet if we would but come

come under the garment of Christ & stoope to that Royall Scepter of Christ, and accept of the promise of life in Jesus Christ, we should be saved by Christ, yet how many of us have refused these glorious profers of grace, and unspeakable loving kindnes offered to our soules. How many Markets for the buying of Spirituall foode hath the Lord vouchsafed unto us, and yet stil we have come empty away. Let us now look back & consider, how many Sermons we have heard, how many times we have received the Sacrament, and there renued our covenants with the Lord, how many motions Gods Spirit hath made at our hearts to repent, and returne, when we have bin hearing of the word

and

and likewiſe in our private meditation, ſaying unto our ſoules why will ye dye; yet (ſinfull wretches that we are) have we not ſlighted theſe motions, and caſt them behinde our backs, as though they did not concerne us? let us now look backe upon all ſlightings of grace, and mercy offered unto us, and ſay with *Pharaohs* Butler, *I wil call to remembrance my faults this day*, and let our ſouls be deeply humbled under the remembrance therof before the Lord. Gen. 41. 9.

Uſe 2. For inſtruction, it teacheth us, that the life of a Chriſtian, is not an idle, but a laborious life, that will coſt a man much paines and travell, if he will indeavour for to be ſincere in his profeſſion, and walke uprightly with the Lord in an holy

holy converſation watching all ſeaſons, and readily imbracing all opportunities, as he ought to doe, that ſo what ſoever he doth may rend to Gods glory, and to the good of his Church and people.

Uſe 3. For incouragement, ſeeing God doth now vouchſafe unto us ſo many glorious ſeaſons & opportunities, which if improved might be to the eternall welfare of our ſoules, now to ſtep in that we may be cured, even while the Angell is moving in the waters of the Sanctuary, for ſo long as the Goſpell is preached unto us, and tenders of mercie offered, ſo long our ſeaſon of grace doth laſt, we ſhould therefore now take theſe opportunities by the forelocke, for we know not how ſoone they may be removed

moved from us, or we from them, and when the dore is once ſhut, though with the fooliſh virgins we may knock, yet it ſhall not be opened unto us: and for our helpe herein we ſhould remember the former directions, and likewiſe learne ſo to order, and overlooke all our buſineſſes, that we may be able to allot to every imployment a proportionable time, and we muſt alwayes take eſpeciall care that our duty to our neighbour never juſtly out that homage and ſervice that we owe unto our God, we muſt therefore never over-charge our ſpirits with multiplicitie of worldly buſineſſes, but keepe our ſouls in ſuch a frame, that we may be able when ever we goe to converſe with God, in any

holy ordinance, to ſet aſide all worldly occaſſions, that neither our hearts, nor our thoughts, may run out upon them.

Uſe 4. For direction, we ſhould therefore labour to prevent the time in getting aforehand with it, ſaith *David*, *Pſal.* 119. 148. *Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, to meditate in thy word.* He was more earneſt in the Study of Gods word, then they that kept the Watch were in their Charge, and *Pſal. 63. 6. When I remember thee on my bedde, and meditate on thee in the night-watches*: He got up before his Nobles when others were aſleepe, he was awake, ſo that he had performed his duty to God, before any State matters were brought before him, before

before his thoughts were ſcattered upon the Affaires of his Kingdome, he is a good Preſident in this for all of us to imitate.

Laſtly, we ſhould learn how to cut off all unneſſary expence of time; if it be ſinfull to ſpend that time which ſhould be for ſpirituall imployment, in worldly buſineſſes, which in themſelves are lawfull, if ſeaſonable diſcarged, how much more ſinfull is it to ſpend it in ſinfull ſports, and pleaſures; we ſhould therefore learne how to redeeme the time out of the hands of our luſts and corruptions, which have too long imployed many precious houres, and glorious opportunities in ſuch ſervices, as doe directly tend to the eternall ruine of our immortall

ſoules

ſoules, even now *whilſt it is called to day, leaſt the Lord ſweare in his wrath that our ſoules ſhall never enter into his reſt.*



FINIS.